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Theology

THE NATURE

OF

THE ATONEMENT.

BY

WILLIAM ADAMSON, D.D.,

Pastor of Buccleuch E. U. Church, Edinburgh.

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PREFACE.

Some one has observed that Atonement by sacrifice runs through all history and all portions of the Bible. To say the least that can be said on the subject, it must be admitted that it lies very near the conscience of man, and is bound up with his spiritual well-being. It is the duty, therefore, of all Christian teachers not only to have clear conceptions of the fundamental doctrine of the Christian Atonement, but also to expound it as opportunity presents itself to those who will read, or who may hear their words. It is a matter of thankfulness that not a few able and earnest writers have recently turned their attention to the subject of sacrifice and atonement; and that some of the more important

controversies of the times gather around the person, life, and work of Jesus Christ. Others may see in this signs of degeneracy, but I look upon it as harbingers of increased vitality. Indeed, in our estimation, whatever has the tendency to lead to a profounder study of man's nature and spiritual condition, and God's works, words, and ways, must do good. It will uproot error, strengthen faith, and flood the mind with light from the source of all life and bliss.

Our aim in the following brief chapters has been more of a positive, than of a controversial character. Believing, as we do, that almost all theories of the Atonement contain some truth, and that no single theory contains all the truth, we have freely admitted the good wherever found, and given it a place in the exposition of our doctrine. At the same time, we have stated our objections to ideas which seem to us to be contrary to both Scripture teaching and fact. The positive statements, however, will be found to be the chief characteristics of the book. We believe, with an

eloquent preacher, that "the refutation which is to last must be positive, not negative. It is an endless work to be uprooting weeds; plant the ground with wholesome vegetation, and then the juices, which would have otherwise fed rankness, will pour themselves into a vigorous growth; the dwindled weeds will be easily raked out then. It is an endless task to be refuting error; plant truth, and the error will pine away." This has been our endeavour, according to the conditions of space in which we had to write. We have considered the Atonement as made known in Scripture, and as formulated in theology, and this has necessitated a certain amount of repetition in its treatment. That anything like a complete view of the transcendent reality has been given, is not thought of for an instant. All, indeed, which is attempted is to give outlines and suggestions which may be serviceable to those who have neither the inclination nor time to study the master works on the doctrine. If this is done to any extent, the writer will be more than rewarded for what has been to him

a matter of spiritual recreation and joy amid the multiform duties of a city pastor's life.

This little volume is laid as a free-will offering at the feet of the glorious One who appears in the heavens as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8).

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

INTRODUCTORY: A STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE, 13

CHAPTER II.

THE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE, . . . 20

CHAPTER III.

THE PERSON OF THE ATONER, . . . 30

CHAPTER IV.

THE INCARNATION—ITS CONDITIONS, . . 42

CHAPTER V.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE ATONING WORK OF CHRIST, ... 52

CHAPTER VI.

PAGE

CHRIST THE SIN-BEARER, ... 64

CHAPTER VII.

CHRIST, HIGH PRIEST AND SACRIFICE, . . 77

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRIST: PROPITIATORY AND A PROPITIATION, . 94

CHAPTER IX.

CHRIST, REDEEMER AND RANSOM, . . . 110

CHAPTER X.

CHRIST A DIVINE SATISFACTION, . . . 126

CHAPTER XI.

CHRIST, BENEFACTOR AND REPRESENTATIVE, . 137

CHAPTER XII.

THE VICARIOUS NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT, . 146

CHAPTER XIII.

PAGE
THE ATONEMENT AND PARDON, . . . 158

CHAPTER XIV.

WHY THE ATONEMENT IS THE GROUND OF PARDON, 173

CHAPTER XV.

THE ATONEMENT AS A PRACTICAL POWER, . 187

There is no sort of objection from the light of nature against the general notion of a mediator between God and man, considered as a doctrine of Christianity.—*Butler.*

Deprived of the great fact of expiation, what, I ask, is Christianity? For ordinary minds, an ordinary morality; for others, an abyss of inconsistencies.—*Vinet.*

There is only the one sacrifice of the great High Priest, and in as far as we participate in it, just in so far are we sanctified, and in so far of pure heart, but no farther.—*John Wessel.*

THE

NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY: A STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE.

THE blind Milton, in the opening of his immortal epic, raised his soul to the Spirit which prefers the humble heart to all stone-built temples, that the necessary conditions might be granted that would enable him to set before his readers the story of man's creation, fall, and recovery, and the Divine relation to the same. Milton's state of mind is eminently becoming in any one who attempts to think and write on such themes as those which pertain to the spiritual side of man's nature, and to the work and ways of the Eternal. Prayer, faith, and humility should characterise those who aim to be God's interpreters. With

a single eye they should seek to know the truth, and make it known. While there should be no loose grasp taken of what is revealed, dogmatism should be eschewed, and a child-like spirit cultivated. This is the attitude I shall seek to occupy in the work which lies before me. While essaying to unfold the nature and design of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, I would ever breathe the supplication into the ear of the prayer-hearing Father,

> "What in me is dark
> Illumine; what is low, raise and support;
> That to the highth of this great argument
> I may assert"[1]

what is in harmony with the facts of history and the word of the living God.

To those who know the past or the present state of thought in the Christian Church, it need not be told that this subject is one which has occupied the attention and elicited the emotions of the best and the greatest men in Christendom for centuries. The history of the fact and doctrine of the Atonement has been the history of the spiritual life of the spiritual Catholic Church. In all ages it has sustained a most intimate connection with

[1] *Milton's Poetical Works*, Gilfillan Ed., p. 4,

what is deepest and most lasting in church life and individual experience. Ecclesiastical movements and political complications are more prominent in history than any doctrine, and this one in particular, could be; but they have not had a more vital influence, nor a more extended sway, than Christian doctrines. The strongest forces do not make most noise, nor do the most powerful factors of life and nature reveal themselves to the sensuous gaze the most. This is true in the external world, and true in regard to the fact of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine of the atonement. These have determined the prosperity and decay of churches. Where they have not been believed in, or only partially so, life has been feeble, and the spreading power of the Gospel weak. On the other hand, where they have been gladly received and held fast, energy and fulness of life have been enjoyed. Evangelical religion has nothing to dread when tested by the canon, "by their fruits ye shall know them." It has at all times, and in all places, been productive of action, character, and progress. "In point of fact, I believe," says F. W. Newman, "that the most fruitful and living religion in Christendom has generally been found among those who

emphatically deified Christ."[1] And this form of Christian religion, which is thought by some to be "a coarse and wretched error," or suited only to the ignorant and uncultivated, has for its centre the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the propitiatory sacrifice which He offered on Calvary's cross.

In our treatment of this subject, it is not to be forgotten that the Atonement is not equivalent to the whole work Christ accomplished when on earth, or that He is doing now in heaven. It might be so viewed, and, perhaps, with propriety, for there is a unity in the mission of the Saviour. As He is the one person who is active in all, an atoning virtue may belong to every aspect of His activity. At the same time, the old theological division of His offices as Prophet, Priest, and King is of service, and will be available for our purpose. By using this division the Atonement belongs to His priestly office, and may be defined to be,—*His obedience until death, even the death of the cross, as the means by which God was propitiated for the sins of men, and the medium through which pardon, holiness, salvation, and the Holy Ghost come to the sinner.* Shedd defines the Atonement as

[1] *The Soul; its Sorrows and its Aspirations*, 5th Ed., p. 53.

"the satisfaction of Divine justice for the sin of man by the substituted penal sufferings of the Son of God."[1] Jenkyn, in his polished work, says, "Atonement is an expedient substituted in the place of the literal infliction of the penalty, so as to supply to the government just and good grounds for dispensing favours to an offender."[2] Dr. Wardlaw amplified the subject in the question, "In what manner may forgiveness be extended to the guilty, so as to satisfy the claim of infinite justice, and thus to maintain in their full dignity, free from every charge of imperfection or of mutability, the character of the Governor, the rectitude of His administration, the sanction of His law, and to provide in the pardoned sinner for the interest of holiness?"[3] The answer to this question is the Atonement of Christ. A still fuller definition is given by Dr. J. J. Van Oosterzee in the words, "On earth Christ offered the sacrifice of atonement, according to the counsel of God, by the perfect obedience with which during His whole life, but especially in His sufferings and death,

[1] *History of Christian Doctrine*, Vol. II., p. 204.

[2] *On the Extent of the Atonement*, p. 2.

[3] *Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ*, pp. 12, 13.

He wholly voluntarily fulfilled the law, and bare God's holy wrath against the sin of the world. By that spotless sacrifice the requirement of the highest majesty has received full satisfaction, and, in consequence thereof, for all who believe in Christ the guilt of sin is in such wise covered, that at the same time its power and dominion are in principle destroyed."[1]

From these definitions, and these are only specimens of many which might have been given, it will be seen that there is an agreement and a difference characterising them all. At the present moment it would be an impossibility to formulate a doctrine of the Atonement which would satisfy the majority of even evangelical Christians, as a complete representation of all the aspects of the subject and the facts of the case. It seems that human logic and utterance fail meanwhile to be adequate to such a task. Nor does it matter so much as some, on first thought, may suppose. The doctrine of the Atonement is of value, but is not so valuable as the fact of the Atonement. The latter is the Divine reality, and the former is the human thought concerning it. "There are large numbers of Christian men," observes R. W. Dale, "who have never been able to

[1] *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 598.

discover any direct relation between the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sin, and who sometimes protest, with vehement moral indignation, against the doctrine which alone explains the power of the Cross over their own conscience and heart. . . . For it is not the doctrine of the death of Christ that atones for human sin, but the death itself; and great as are the uses of the doctrine in promoting the healthy and vigorous development of the spiritual life, the death of Christ has such a wonderful power, that it inspires faith in God, and purifies the heart, though the doctrine of the atonement may be unknown or denied." [1] There are many faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ who know that they have received pardon through His death and Atonement, who would, if questioned as to their doctrinal beliefs, reply, as it is said an old Scotch woman replied to her minister, "I know nothing about justification or regeneration, and I canna speak for Him; but this I ken, I could dee for Him." Though, we thank God, even babes can believe in Christ as the one who saves them

[1] *The Atonement; Congregational Lecture for* 1875, pp. 3, 4. This is a work of rare excellence, and should be carefully studied by those who desire to have correct views on the subject.

from sin's power and punishment, without being theologians in the scientific acceptation of that word, still it is of moment to have correct, if not comprehensive, doctrinal views of the all-important fact. Such views are possible to those who are willing to be scholars in the school of faith, and it is to aid our readers in forming such, that we shall attempt to place before them the statements of Scripture regarding both the facts and the doctrine of the sufferings and death of the Son of God.

CHAPTER II.

THE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE.

VIEWED historically, the Atonement of Jesus has ever had a place among the Christian verities. As a *fact* it has been believed in by all those who call Jesus, Lord and Saviour; as a *doctrine* it has had a history which should instruct those who too often confound the facts and the doctrines of our holy religion. Practically considered, it has ever been the same grand and important event, or cluster

of events; but the doctrine, which is the human explanation of the fact, has been only gradually elaborated, and has not even now reached its full development. Indeed, as Shedd says, as we examine history "we shall find a slower unfolding of this great cardinal doctrine than of any other of the principal truths of Christianity."[1] The Apostolic Fathers did not deal with the doctrinal aspects of the subject, but were satisfied with expressing their faith in language which was not far removed from that of the sacred volume. "The very way," says Dr. Donaldson, "in which Clement of Rome mentions the death of Christ, shows that he attached a mysterious efficacy to it; but it seems to me that he does not attempt to explain the mystery. He simply says that the effect of Christ's death was to benefit our flesh and our souls. . . It is a statement of facts, and not of explanations."[2] So was it with the other members of that band of devoted men who succeeded the apostles, and carried forward the work of the Church. They were eminently practical, and Christ was to them their all in all. They did not speculate, but believe;

[1] *History of Christian Doctrine*, Vol. II., p. 204.
[2] *Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. I., p. 161.

and did not formulate doctrine so much as rest and rejoice in fact. Some of them had, nevertheless, very comprehensive conceptions of the relation of Christ's work to the sinners of mankind. One bright passage from Diognetus must be given. In it he says God "Himself took on Him the burden of our iniquities, He gave His own Son as a ransom for us, the Holy One for transgressors, the blameless One for the wicked, the righteous One for the unrighteous, the incorruptible One for the corruptible, the immortal One for them that are mortal. For what other thing was capable of covering our sins than His righteousness? By what other one was it possible that we, the wicked and the ungodly, could be justified, than by the only Son of God? O sweet exchange! O unsearchable operation! O benefits surpassing all expectation, that the wickedness of many should be hid in a single righteous One, and that the righteousness of One should justify many transgressors!"[1] These words remind us of Luther in his more spiritual moods, or some of those deep religious men who combined fervent, emotional religion with clear doctrine. Christ and His work were honoured in the age of the early fathers, who

[1] *Ante-Nicene Library*, Vol. I., pp. 312, 313.

had to stand the persecutions of men and the fiery darts of the Evil One.

The leaders of Christian thought who followed the Apostolic Fathers contended, as they did, for the value of the sufferings and death of Christ as the ground of salvation, but their views were twisted and obscured by their conceptions of the position of Satan and his power over man. A long list of theologians, beginning with the name of Justin Martyr and concluding with that of the massive-minded Augustine, considered the doctrine, and endeavoured to give it a more definite form than it previously possessed. It was afterwards considered by the mediæval Fathers, and especially by Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, who may be looked upon as the determiner of one doctrine of the Atonement. Anselm flourished in the twelfth century, and was the first divine who set himself to formulate the doctrine on a scientific basis. He did so in his work called *Cur Deus Homo*, "why did God become man?" In this work he "develops," to use the language of Ritschl, "the traditional idea of redemption with that of atonement, or legal propitiation of God. He controverts the patristic treatment of the death of Christ as a ransom paid to the devil,

inasmuch as neither he, nor sinful humanity, has any right outside of the power and the will of God. . . . He develops the idea that God is reconciled to sinful man, and that His will, which had declared itself for punishment and condemnation, is changed into a purpose of grace, through the satisfaction rendered to Him by the God-man Christ. This thought is methodically unfolded, so that the *necessity* of such a satisfaction is shown to arise, generally, from the honour and glory of God, and especially from His justice. The *possibility* of it is discerned in the peculiar personality of the God-man, and the *reality* of it is traced to the relation between His death on the one hand, and the value of His person and voluntary passion on the other."[1] The principles of this theory have dominated the thoughts of the leading theologians of all sections of the Christian Church since Anselm's day, and they were, with modifications and additions, the ruling powers in the mind of the Reformers, as they have been in the case of their followers. In modern times there has been a recoil from the Anselmic theory of the Atonement. It has been looked upon as too precise, too meta-

[1] *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 25.

physical, legal, and scientific. Its formula, it is averred, does not take in all the facts, and is of a nature that could not express the whole truth. When brought to the touchstone of the narratives of the Gospels, and the declarations of the Epistles, its imperfection, it is said, is at once apparent. To some it looks like an attempt to explain the sufferings, life, and death of Jesus, by means of logical formulæ, which is as unsatisfactory as to seek to understand the meaning of a mother's tears by subjecting them to a chemical analysis. The theory as Anselm left it, and as modified by succeeding divines is, without doubt, incomplete; but it has done good, and contains elements which cannot be excluded, with safety, from any doctrine which may be formed on the subject.

Since the days of Grotius, a modified doctrine of the Atonement has obtained, both in this and other countries. It has been called the "Rectorial or Governmental theory," and has been ably advocated by such men as Payne, Gilbert, Jenkyn, and a considerable number of transatlantic divines, among whom Barnes and Beman may be mentioned. This doctrine teaches that the death of Christ was demanded for governmental purposes only, and that the

justice it satisfied was not retributive, but public justice, whose function is to protect the interests of the community, and to see to it that the honour and power of the law and authority be maintained. This theory belongs to moderate Calvinism, and has been adopted substantially by many Arminians.

Breaking away from the simple legal view of the Atonement, there have been earnest and devout efforts put forth by some theologians in recent times to reconstruct it on a wider basis, so as to answer to all the aspects it is presented in for reception in the Bible. A comprehensive classification of modern theories is afforded us by Dr. A. B. Bruce,[1] which we will take the liberty of transferring to our pages.

First, There is the "Prophetic theory," which has been advocated by such men as Ritschl and the late Frederick W. Robertson, who maintain that the sufferings and death of Christ were accidents in the discharge of the duties of His prophetical office, and did not constitute any part of His real work. This is the view adopted also by those Unitarians who have faith in Christ as one who had a Divine mission.

[1] *Humiliation of Christ*, pp. 396-398.

Secondly, There is the "Sympathetic theory," in which our Lord is represented as coming into the world to sacrifice His will to the uttermost, and, by doing so, suffered through the sympathy He had with the suffering and the sinful, and thereby secured moral influence over them for their spiritual good. Of moderns, Bushnell is the most elaborate and eloquent expounder of this doctrine.

Thirdly, There is the "Redemption by Sample theory," which insists that Christ became a High Priest before God for man, and that His act was theirs, and His sanctification involved the sanctification of the whole race. This act, on the part of Christ, included Himself as well as the sinners of mankind; for He did nothing for us that He did not also do for Himself. What He did in his own personality was a sample of what He accomplished for others. This conception of Christ's work is the one expounded by the late Frederick D. Maurice, Edward Irvine, and others of that school.

Fourthly, There is the "Perfect Confession of Sin theory," which has been so beautifully and earnestly advocated by Dr. M'Leod Campbell, in his celebrated work on the Atonement. Jesus Christ identified Himself

with man in his sinful condition, and became a partaker of the world's sin. In this condition He confessed it with a perfect confession before God, and in the Amen He gave to the Father's condemnation the value of Christ's work is found. "Whatever, therefore, is imperfect in our constitution, and in our obedience, is supplied by virtue of our identification with Christ through sympathy; and, on the other hand, whatever in His confession was lacking in the element of personal consciousness of sin or guilt, was supplied by His identification of Himself through sympathy with us."[1] This doctrine has a strong hold on not a few, and though in its entirety it is not held by any class, it has had an influence in moulding the minds of some eloquent preachers and writers. In this, as well as in the other doctrines referred to, there is some truth. "I have been able," adds Dr. Bruce, at the conclusion of his survey of the theories named, "to recognise each in succession as a fragment of the truth, one aspect of the many-sided wisdom of God revealed in the earthly ministry of His eternal Son." This, too, we may be able to say ere we close.

[1] *XXXIX. Articles; a Historical and Speculative Exposition*, by Rev. Jos. Miller, B.D., p. 118.

Amid those various currents of thought which are flowing around, it is well that we have a sure word of prophecy to which we can take heed, and in whose oracles we can find what the Lord Himself saith as to the design and nature of His work. Systems of theology may be defective or erroneous, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. To the written revelation contained in the Holy Scriptures we shall repair as a guide for our thoughts. Reason, Providence, Conscience, and Experience may suggest, but they cannot explain what we desire to understand. To the Bible we must turn as the standard of appeal, and to its decisions we must bow. And as the field through which we will pass is not free from difficulties, caution must be exercised lest opinion be substituted for truth, preconceived notions for Scripture teaching. "Bearing in mind," as Newman Hall remarks, "how deep are its mysteries, let us examine the subject in a reverential spirit, anxious to know what God has taught, and not to adapt His word to our theories. Let us not dogmatically propound any speculations of our own, nor harshly judge our brother for his. Not seeking to be wise above what is written, let us not be indolently contented without striving to reach up to what

is written; and may the Holy Spirit so reveal to us the truth of Christ, that we may rejoice in possessing for ourselves, and being instrumental in communicating to others, the salvation achieved for us by Him." [1]

CHAPTER III.

THE PERSON OF THE ATONER.

CHRIST is the sum and substance of Christianity. They are so intimately related to one another, that it is impossible to entertain correct ideas of the latter and have erroneous views of the former. Sadly deficient views of the plan of mercy revealed in the Gospel may be found in a mind alongside comparatively correct thoughts of the person of Jesus, but the reverse of this is impossible. In His person there lay in germ all the principles and truths, afterwards fully made known, on which the Church of God is founded, and by which souls are blessed. How far, then, from the

[1] *Sacrifice: or Pardon and Purity*, p. 6.

truth are such statements as that "the value of the Gospel does not depend in any degree on the idea which we entertain of Christ." The history of the Church and its controversies is an array of incontrovertible facts which prove the very opposite. All Christian doctrines are modified to the core by the views which are held as to who and what Jesus Christ really is. This renders it necessary, before proceeding further, to consider the question, Who is Jesus Christ as to personality and nature? The worker must be understood before his work can even be looked at as it should. This necessitates a brief survey of the Scriptural representations of the founder of the Christian religion.

1. The first and simplest idea which can be formed of Jesus Christ, from the study of the records of His life, is that He was a man, properly human. There are no Docetæ in this century who think that Christ's body was a mere semblance and devoid of reality. All who believe in His historical existence feel compelled to maintain that He was like unto the members of the race, and was a real human being, possessed of a body and a reasonable soul. If we regard the Gospels as a painting sketched and filled up by a Divine artist, "the

man Christ Jesus" stands on the foreground, and the other elements which enter into the whole conception of His person are shaded off till they merge in the heavenly, which transcends the eye of reason, and can only be beheld by the eye of faith. He who was cradled in the manger, in the outhouse near the City of Bethlehem, and was crucified on Calvary, possessed all the elements, and was environed by all the conditions which belong to common human nature. He was born of a woman, and was a child, weak and helpless in her arms. As a boy He obeyed His parents, and would have those experiences which are common to boyhood. As His days and years increased, He grew in stature and wisdom, and in favour with God and man. His development physically, mentally, and spiritually, was normal, and after the manner common to all. When mature, Jesus stood in the most intimate relations to the circle of society in which He moved, and by means of the sympathy of His large heart He entered into the feelings and circumstances of His human fellows; weeping with those who wept, and rejoicing with those who were glad. Jesus was weary with His journey, was hungry and thirsty, was bowed down with sorrow, and capable of death.

When fatigued He sought refreshment in sleep, and when sad in soul He sought relief in tears. Never was there a truer human life lived on this globe than that which Jesus of Nazareth lived. He who reads the Gospels, and does not in his deepest consciousness feel that He whose words, deeds, and life are there portrayed, was a true son of man and a real human brother, is not susceptible of understanding what is truest and most noble in human nature.

2. Having arrived at the all but universally accepted conclusion that Jesus Christ was human, we cannot rest there. Deeper thought, and a more careful consideration of the testimony of the sacred writers, work the conviction in the mind that He is not a mere man, but transcends all possible classification with the rest of the children of Adam. He is a man, it is true, but He is more. Though He can be numbered with us all, He refuses to be reckoned as entirely of the race. Jesus is human, but He is superhuman; His personality is unique. This is true as to His nature, character, and position, as proved by His own utterances, and what has been testified in the Bible and by the history of the Church concerning Him. Everywhere throughout the four Evangelists there are claims made by and for

the Lord Jesus Christ which could not be spoken of in connection with any mere man without serious error and blasphemy. The very title "Son of Man," which is used both by Jesus and His disciples, marks Him out and off from others. This appellation expresses, as it has been observed, "His elevation above the ordinary level, and the actualisation in Him and through Him of the ideal standard of human nature under its moral and religious aspect, or in its relation to God. He is the centre of the unity of mankind—'the recapitulation' of humanity, to use a term of Irenæus."[1] Being this, He is spotless in character, pure in thought, emotion, and action, the true Son of Man, and, also in the ethical sense, as well as in a higher sense, the true Son of God. Amid the ruins of the temple of man He stands as the solitary erect pillar whose head penetrates the heavens, and whose basis is solidly laid in a nature other than created. Those who hold to the perfect moral character of Christ cannot logically classify Him among mere human beings. To be consistent they must elevate Him to a region higher and purer than that to which the imperfect and the fallen

[1] *The Person of Christ*, by Philip Schaff, D.D., LL.D., p. 84.

belong. "I hold," the Rev. Joseph Cook remarks, "that in the character of our Lord, the only perfect adaptation man's nature has ever shown to the laws of the universe, there was something supernatural. It is not natural for the finite to be perfect, but our Lord's character was perfect; and His doctrine, and His only, fits the universe. The sinlessness of Christ is one proof of His origin. He does not show the imperfection of the finite in moral things. He is absolutely perfect, and, as such, supernatural."

It is in this sphere He is placed by the sacred writers, and by many of His own words. This is true regarding the whole four Gospels and all the Epistles, but it is especially so in the case of the fourth Gospel. There is not one single instance in which Jesus is spoken of in the Gospel of John in which the testimony can be fully explained and accounted for on the hypothesis that He is only a man. What is more dimly stated in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is clearly declared by the beloved apostle. If they make known that He is the only one who knows the Father at first hand, that He is to judge the world, that He is essential to the rest of the human soul, that He came to seek and save the lost, that He

had power on earth to forgive sin, and that He would be with His disciples to the end of the world,—John points Him out as the Word of God, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, the Giver of eternal life, the Light and Life of men, and the Living Bread which came down from heaven, who should give His flesh and blood as the food of the world. Of no mere man could such things be said with even a semblance of truth. The greatest and noblest of Adam's sons would have shrunk from either saying such things of themselves or allowing their nearest friends to speak of them after this fashion. The purer in character they were, they would have shrunk from this the more. Surely, then, there is here a greater than Moses or Solomon, David or Isaiah, Socrates or Plato, Newton or Milton, Luther or Knox, Fenelon or Wesley. This One is incomparable, transcendent, superhuman. "I know men," said the great Napoleon, "and I tell you that Jesus is not a man." This verdict is the only one to which the evidence unhesitatingly leads.

3. The superhuman nature of Jesus is further evidenced by those Scriptures which declared that His entrance into this world was not the beginning of His existence. He pre-existed in

a conscious, active state before He became a denizen of this lower sphere. This is proved both by passages which assume this doctrine, and by others which plainly assert it. To the former belong such utterances as "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son;"[1] "The Son of Man is come to seek and save the lost;"[2] and, "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also likewise himself took part in the same."[3] To the latter belong the direct statements, "Before Abraham was I am;"[4] "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;"[5] "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven."[6] These words are clear and to the point, and teach that Christ had a pre-existence before He assumed human nature and tabernacled in the flesh. No better plan could be adopted to bring out the full force of such passages as the one quoted last, than by examining the way its force is sought to be broken by those who contend that Christ is a mere man. When commenting on the words of Christ to Nicodemus, Professor Norton says,

[1] John iii. 16. [2] Luke xix. 10. [3] Heb. ii. 14.
[4] John viii. 58. [5] John xvii. 5. [6] John iii. 13.

"Heaven being considered by the Jews as a local habitation of the Deity, 'to ascend to heaven' is here a figure used to denote the becoming acquainted with the purpose and will of God."[1] If this interpretation were correct, it would follow that when the same speaker says that "He came down from heaven," He simply used a figurative expression to unfold the idea that He had become ignorant of the will and purposes of the Father! And yet it is when thus ignorant that He says, "I am the Light of the world" and the "Life of men"! The same treatment is given to a kindred passage which is a proof text for the pre-existence of Jesus Christ. When the disciples were murmuring at some of the hard sayings of the Lord, He asked them, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?"[2] In the previous verses He had been representing himself as "the Living Bread which came down from heaven," and His question is designed to point the disciples forward to the time when He should ascend to His original glory. Concerning these words the author just quoted

[1] *The Statement of Reasons for not believing the Doctrines of Trinitarians*, by Andrew Norton, p. 147.

[2] John vi. 62.

says, "The meaning is, 'Does it offend you that I speak of my death? what then if ye shall see me rising from the dead, and appearing where I was before?'" This is exceedingly weak and imperfect exegesis, and shows to what straits able men are driven by their humanitarian theories when they consider those passages which treat of the nature of the Saviour. The veriest child, if it brought its thought to bear on the text, could not fail to see that the place to which Jesus was to ascend was just the heaven of God, the scene of the especial glory of the uncreated One. While He was on the earth Jesus ever remembered that He came from God and was to return to God. He prayed towards the end of His career that He might be glorified as He had been before the world was. What could be more explicit as to the subject under consideration? Those sublimely elevating desires which were wafted to heaven carry us back to the time when Jesus was with the Father, before the race of man existed or the system of material things was brought forth. They point to the eternity that is past, and raise the utterer of them to a position higher by far than that occupied by all mere mortal men.

4. One step higher takes us into the pres-

ence of Jesus Christ as Divine. This must be taken if the full truth on the subject is to be reached. There are, doubtless, numerous difficulties connected with this doctrine, and there are mysteries before which the human mind must stand baffled and perplexed; but if we are true to what is revealed, there must be no hesitation in falling before the Son of Man, and, with Thomas, acknowledging Him as our Lord and our God.

The testimony of the Bible as to the true divinity of Jesus is explicit, complete, and richly varied. It runs through all the books of the New Testament, and in every possible way makes known the being who appeared in Galilee and Judea nearly nineteen centuries ago as none other than "God manifest in the flesh."[1] He is the supreme "*God* who is over all blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5). As the supreme God He is the "*Creator* of all things visible and invisible, and without Him was not anything made that was made," (John i. 3; Col. i. 16). "He is the true God and eternal life" (1 John v. 20.) All the attributes of the infinite Jehovah are said to belong to Jesus. He is the *Almighty* who upholds all things by the word of His power

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 16.

(Rev. i. 8; Heb. i. 3.) As *Omnipresent* He will be in the midst of the two or three gathered together in His name the wide world over, and down to the end of time (Matt. xviii. 20.) As *Omniscient* He knows all things and beings, even the Father with as perfect knowledge as that by which He is known of the Father (John xxi. 17; Matt. xi. 27). As Divine He is *worshipped* by all the pure and holy spirits which are around the throne. With loud voice they cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory" (Rev. v. 12; Isa. vi. 3; with which compare Matt. xii. 41). When all these things are predicated of Jesus Christ, no one need marvel that He said to His disciples, "I and my Father are one."[1] "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."[2] Or that John should have opened his Gospel with the words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son of God."[3] The Divine incarnation is not only possible, it is actual. It is a fact of history—the most important fact of all

[1] John x. 30. [2] John xiv. 9. [3] John i. 1, 14.

time. The proper humanity and the true divinity of Jesus Christ are the peculiar characteristics of Christianity, and its crowning glory. Both go to explain the influence He has exercised on the most advanced nations of the earth, and why He has given life to the dead, pardon to the condemned, hope to the despairing, and is still leading the peoples to a more elevated state and more blissful times.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INCARNATION—ITS CONDITIONS.

God hath visited this world in the person of Jesus Christ. He who is the High and Holy One, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, has humbled Himself and taken up His abode with the poor, the weak, and the sinful. This is the glad tidings of the Gospel, the most wonderful message which could fall on the ear of man, and the most joyful that could stir his heart. If this were not true there would be no religion bearing the name of

Christ, and no light to fall on the road which leads to the tomb. The Incarnation is the centre of the Christian system; and because God has become man, man can become a partaker of the Divine nature. In this there may be, and is, mystery; but it is the mystery of love and mercy, more than of simple fact and nature. God, because He is God, and possessor of perfect freedom, is capable of sacrifice and of bending down that He may bless. Knowing this we are at rest, and believe where we cannot fully know, and accept as true what, in a logical manner, we may not be able to prove.

1. A question of importance is suggested by the doctrine of the Incarnation, which must have our attention, viz.:—Which of the Divine persons assumed our nature and became man? There is, we assume, a plurality of persons in the one Divine nature, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In the one Jehovah there has ever been society,—sweet, sacred, ineffable, and eternal. There never was a time when it could be said that God as a single person was alone and solitary, shut up to self-communion. The living God was as He is, a plurality of persons, in whose consciousness reciprocal loves, joys, and thoughts could be experienced, and

where Father, Son, and Holy Ghost rejoiced in each other's joy, were embraced by each other's love, and had their wills in full harmony with each other's desires. But in the nature of things they could not all come into this world and become man. Nor could the Father thus act. He is the representative of the Godhead, and has ever dwelt in His own mysterious and glorious being. All actions of a transient character had their origin *in* Him; but neither in creation, providence, nor redemption, was the Father the instrumental cause for carrying out the Divine eternal purpose. That instrumental cause was ever He who is called the Son of God, the Logos by whom all things were made. It was, therefore, the second Person of the adorable Trinity who became man, and became the Christ of history. The Father "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."[1] Paul tells us that "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him for us all."[2] And John declares that God "sent His Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the world."[3] From these and kindred statements we learn that the Father sent His divine Son into the earth to do what the Father, as divine, could not accomplish. This

[1] John iii. 16. [2] Rom. viii. 32. [3] 1 John iv. 10.

Son was no mere influence or shadow, but a person like the Father and the Holy Ghost, who could act, pray, suffer, live, and die. Writing of another Dr. Norman Macleod says, "In the eternal duality of Father and Son he saw realised the one Divine being; and in that duality he also saw the full-orbed idea of moral perfection—the perfection of mutual love; the perfection at once of righteous government and of righteous obedience; the perfection of giving and receiving—and all harmonised through the eternal Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son."[1] And it is the Divine person of the Son who is exhibited in His humiliation and glory in the Gospels; and those who look at Him with the eye of the mind prepared and trained, will see His glory, and through the Son will reach the Father.

2. In becoming man, the Son of God assumed human nature in its entirety. The earth and the heavens were made to reveal the power and the wisdom of the Godhead. Prophets, inspired historians, and sweet singers of psalms, were channels through which the Divine mind was made known and manifested in ancient times. But Jesus was more than the creation or

[1] *Good Words*, May, 1872.

inspired prophet, and stood in a closer relation to God as His Son, than God did to those things or persons who were the mediums of His revelation. He was not God *and* man, but He was the Divine-man. As a Divine person who possessed eternally the Divine nature, He assumed the nature of man, and thereby became a Theanthropic-person, one person in two natures for ever. God thus came down to the position of the race, and took into union with His uncreated nature the formed and created nature of a child, and in that nature lived on the earth for thirty-three years. And that nature was assumed whole and entire. It consisted of a body and soul, and had all the weakness incident to humanity, and the susceptibilities which belong to us all. Temptation was real to the Incarnate One, and the moral battle He fought was no mere display, but a dread reality. The sufferings and death He endured were not those of a mere man, but those of a Divine person in human nature. Thus God entered into historic relations with the race. In the greatness of His love He became one of them, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. With reverence it may be said that by means of this humiliation He was enabled to experience and do what otherwise would have been to

Him impossible. For through and by means of human nature He was tempted as we are, oppressed as we are, made one with a sinful race as we all are, and these things would have been infinitely removed from the self-contained and ever blessed Jehovah. Though in the form of God He emptied Himself of His glory, and took on Him the form of a servant. Astounding truth! and yet one which lies at the basis of the common faith.

3. Though the heavenly Father did "send," "give," and "deliver up" His own Son, the assumption of human nature by the Second Person of the blessed Trinity was not without or against His will. On the contrary, it was voluntary, the result of free-will obedience. The Divine procedure is never arbitrary, or without reasons wise and good. They may not always be revealed, or, when revealed, perfectly apprehended; but they exist. In the case of the Incarnation they would doubtless be numerous and worthy of God, and sufficient to lead the will of the Son of God into the condition of perfect submisssion to that of the Father. Love was the prompting cause of the Incarnation, as it was "the root of creation;" love to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the universe of moral beings, and man the transgressor.

This love was the motive of the Father in the gift of the Son, and it was the motive which led the Son to come with joy to the earth. "Lo, I come," He said, "in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God."[1] With no constrained mind did He leave the bosom of the Father, but with the spontaneity of a true filial heart He descended to the condition of man. He did so because He was one with the Father in thought and feeling regarding the claims, honour, and glory of God in the redemption of those who were bound. "Therefore doth my Father love me," said Jesus to His disciples, "because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power (ἐξουσίαν) to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."[2] This is the utterance of true spontaneity and obedience on the part of the Son in relation to the will of the Father. His meat and drink was to do His will. "This free disposal of His person with respect to life and death, was the privilege He enjoyed here below. To cover this incomparable privilege

[1] Psalm xl. 7, 8; Heb. x. 7.
[2] John x. 17, 18.

with a veil of humility, He thought it good to call it a command. This, then, was the tenor of the *mandate* with which the Father sent Him. Thou shalt die or not die, thou shalt rise again or not rise again, according to the free promptings of thy love."[1] The obedience of a child to an earthly parent, when it is purest and fullest, is but a poor illustration of the way Jesus Christ ever delighted to obey, honour, and execute the will of Him whom He called "my Father." When we pause and meditate on the mystery of the Incarnation and all that it involves, we must never lose sight of the truth that it was not the work of necessity or of nature, but the outcome of the free-will decision of Father and Son, a manifestation of willingness which is morally perfect and sublime.

4. While no necessity compelled the Second Person of the Trinity to become Jesus Christ of Nazareth, there was a fitness in His doing so. He became man because of the intimate relation He stood in to the race as a whole, and to all its members. This is a department of Scripture truth which has been too often lost sight of by writers on the doctrine of the Atonement, and hence they have failed to

[1] Godet, *in loco*, Vol. II., p. 396.

meet some of the most important demands which have been made upon them. If Jesus is to represent man, He must have a peculiar fitness to do so, which will be as apparent as that which the first Adam possessed when he stood before God as the federal head of his race. That He had this fitness is proved by no obscure statements in the Old and New Testaments. *First*, It was *in* Christ, as well as *by* Christ, as the divine Logos, that the race was originally constituted. God said, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness;"[1] which declaration is not by any means exhausted by saying Adam was the image of God. This, indeed, he was not. He was only made *in* the image and *after* the likeness; and this image, we are assured by Paul, was none other than Jesus Christ, "who is the image of the invisible God."[2] In looking at the creation of man, we have, *first*, man created; *secondly*, the image after which he was created; and, *thirdly*, we have the creator, God. So that the Divine Logos is the Divine person nearest to man, and related to Adam more closely than any other—the Mediator of creation as well as redemption. This view is corroborated by those far-reaching revelations of the Divine

[1] Gen. i. 26. [2] Col. i. 15.

genealogy of Jesus which are recorded in the prologue of John's Gospel. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made which was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men."[1] This same light is "the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."[2] Sustaining such intimate relations to the race of man as Creator and Imparter of life and light, its members were peculiarly "His own." Before the earth was formed and its inhabitants produced, as the "Wisdom of God" Jesus thought of those who should be formed after the image of God. He loved them ideally, and as He thought of them His heart was moved with feeling, "rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth; and His delights were with the sons of men."[3] Being so closely associated with man in his ideal, origin and relationship, it was Divinely becoming that when man fell and lost his original standing in faith and righteousness, the Son of God, in whom, by whom, and for whom all things were created, should descend into the time-sphere and earth arena, that He might rescue him from his low and lost estate, and place him once more among the dutiful children of the heavenly Father.

[1] John i. 3, 4. [2] John i. 9. [3] Prov. viii. 31.

As the Son of God, Jesus desired to have those on the created plane who should, to the extent of their capacity and nature, be placed on a level with Himself. His voluntary incarnation was the principal step taken to accomplish this desire, and the one which involved all the rest. It was meet, therefore, that He should become a partaker of flesh and blood, that they whose nature He assumed might receive the adoption of children.

CHAPTER V.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE ATONING WORK OF CHRIST.

VERY much depends upon the position occupied as to the correctness and extent of the view obtained. On a late occasion, when in the Lake District of England, this was most vividly impressed upon our minds. We had looked around on the quiet lake, the distant mountains, and the near hills. They were beautiful in their individuality and picturesqueness, but

it did not appear as if there were a unity connecting the whole. When this conception was deepening, a dweller in the neighbourhood said, "Come with me and I will place you where you can see the scenery of the place to advantage." In obedience to his request we followed, and when we reached a certain spot, he said, "Sit down there, and let your eye take in the whole landscape, and you will perceive how grand it is." As we did so, the grouping of hill, dale, mountain, wood, and village, was harmonious, and the whole was surrounded by the outline of the mountains and the heavens, as with a frame of gold. From this we derived the lesson that a right standpoint is necessary to understand what is true and beautiful in nature, and also what is true in religion. It is, above all, necessary that we may understand Christ and His work. This standpoint we reach when, by faith, we stand beside the Divine-man, the true Son of God and man, and watch Him as He pursues His career from the manger to the cross.

1. In doing so, let it be observed that His mission is a saving one. In making this assertion, it is not forgotten that there are many theologians who are of the opinion that the Incarnation would have taken place if man had

stood in his integrity, and not departed from the paths of obedience. This conception had a place in the minds of some of the early fathers, and it has been reproduced, both on the Continent and in this country, in this century. The Incarnation "was not," says Archbishop Trench, "a mere result and reparation of the fall; such an act as, except for that, would not have been; but lay bedded at a far deeper depth in the counsels of God, for the glory of His Son, and the exaltation of that race formed in His image and His likeness."[1] "So wondrous a fact," observes Oosterzee, "as the incarnation of the Son of God in Christ Jesus the Lord, can surely scarcely be merely the consequence of a not absolutely necessary phenomenon, sin."[2] Others have like thoughts. Whether this speculation be true or not does not concern us here, because we have to do, not with what might have been in other circumstances, but what actually took place in the world as existent. Regarding this, Scripture is not only not silent, but speaks with a clear articulate voice. Jesus Himself makes the nature of His mission known when He declared, "The Son of Man

[1] *University Sermons*, pp. 11, 12.
[2] *The Image of Christ*, p. 76.

is come to seek and to save the lost."[1] He descended into this mundane scene, that man might not perish, but that he might have everlasting life. This thought runs through all the works and acts of the Lord. Before His eye the temple of man lay in ruins. Its symmetry, beauty, and sacredness were gone, and, over the havoc wrought by the enemy, the Divine-man sighed. But He did more. He came to rebuild, to gather the stones together, polish them anew, and fit them into a house of God, a building which would become once more the abode of the Holy One. Or, to lay aside the figure, man made to love, serve, and glorify God, had missed the mark; he sinned and came short of the chief end for which he was made. Because of iniquity and transgression he came under the condemnation of the law, which is holy, just, and good, was blurred in character, and degraded in being. From the position of a child he had fallen to that of an enemy and prodigal. From being a loyal subject of the heavenly King, he became a rebel who lifted up the arm of defiance against the Majesty on high; from the standing of a freeman in the presence of God, he became the slave of sin and the bondsman of

[1] Luke xix. 10.

iniquity, bound to sin, death, and hell. This was man's state, and to redeem him from this sad and lost condition Christ came. The chief end of His life and work manward was to rescue, redeem, deliver, save. His message was one of forgiveness, pardon, and peace. His name was to be Jesus; because He would save His people from their sins, and deliver those who trusted in Him from all iniquity.

2. As a Saviour Jesus had to deal with the sin of the world. True, there are other aspects of His mission than the one which had to do with man as a condemned sinner; but this aspect has, it appears to us, pre-eminence given to it in the Bible. Type, prophecy, Psalm, Gospel, and Epistle bear testimony that Jesus Christ did not appear as an educator, reformer, martyr, only or chiefly; but that He came in the greatness of His strength to grapple with the monster enemy to lost man and the universe—sin, and to deal with it in such a way as to remove its power, consequences, and condemnation. When near the end of His earthly journey, He opened to the half-instructed minds of the twelve, at the Passover table, the truth that His blood was to be shed for the remission of sins. At the same time He told them that He had many things to tell

them, but they were not able to hear the news at present. By and by they would receive the Holy Ghost, who should lead them into all truth, and take of the things of Christ and show them unto the apostles. This was done after Pentecost, and the truths referred to are set before us in the Acts of the Apostles and the inspired letters addressed to the churches. In these the work of Christ, as dealing with sin and its consequences, is lucidly made known. He "died for sin," "tasted death for every man," "put away sin," "for sin He condemned sin in the flesh," and expressions of similar import, are everywhere in the New Testament. Sin was the foe Christ came to close with and to conquer. It had wrought ravages in the fair creation, and had become, if the words are allowable, an immoral dynamic, which destroyed the peace and well-being of those who made it their own. In its train came ruin, darkness, slavery, and death. From of old it had exercised sway in the earth, and up till the fulness of the times when the strong Son of God descended to destroy the works of the devil and put an end to sin, it increased in virulence and power. Before its terrible power the best and the noblest of all peoples stood appalled.

They confessed the evil, and felt its heavy chain; but were impotent to snap it asunder, and to break the sceptre of this destructive king. Christ came for this purpose. He entered into historical, personal relations with man to save him from the condition in which he had sunk by reason of transgression. And His work had a special bearing on sin. With it He entered into conflict, with it He struggled, and over it He conquered, and by conquering brought salvation as a free gift to those who were far off and those who were nigh.

3. Further, in dealing with sin the Son of God did so by suffering. The position which the sufferings of Christ have in the mission He came to accomplish, is one which cannot be overlooked when His work is under consideration. They are so pre-eminently brought forward, that it might be truly said that He was born to suffer and sent into the world to die. It is not without overpowering reasons that so much is recorded in the Scriptures concerning the agony, the sorrow, the wounds, the blood, and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. His life, so pure, so loving, so devout and devoted to God and man, was important. His teachings, so wise, authoritative, and full of spirit and life, were of transcendent importance.

But to the minds of His inspired apostles and the evangelists His sufferings, agony, and death were of the greatest possible importance, and constituted the chief part of His earthly mission. Everywhere they make known those facts and declarations which imply and reveal suffering. Christ was despised, persecuted, tempted, betrayed, scourged, spit upon, crucified, and slain. These were only outward symbols of a deeper agony which filled His heart, and that weighed Him down all through life, and was experienced as the dreadful burden in the garden of Gethsemane and on the Cross. Because of this suffering the apostles preached Christ and Him crucified, and gloried in His cross. His death was to them more pregnant of meaning and influence than His life. "In this respect," Professor Crawford remarks most appositely, "Christ assuredly stands alone of all the generations of men that ever lived. For though it be appointed unto men once to die, it cannot be said that dying is their appointed work, still less that it is thus habitually regarded by them. They come into the world, not mainly for the purpose of dying, but for the purpose of 'doing, with all their might, whatever their hand findeth,' so long as life endures. And death

is to them, not only the termination, but often the utter subversion and frustration of all that throughout life they have been striving to accomplish. Of the Lord Jesus, however, it may be truly said, that He came into the world pre-eminently *in order to die*, and that by His death the end of His life was fully accomplished."[1] Suffering and death were no accidents to His mission, but entered into the plan which was portioned out for Him by the will of the Father. Though holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners, not deserving of sorrow or suffering, and not requiring it for discipline, the only perfectly holy one in man's nature was a sufferer, a great sufferer, the greatest sufferer. Concerning none other could Isaiah have written, "He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,"[2] except the Son of Man, who was delivered by the hand and counsel of God, and taken by lawless hands and slain. All theories, therefore, which ignore or assign a very subordinate place to the sorrows, agony, and death of the Lord are partial, and come short of the mind of the Spirit as to the work which Christ accomplished.

[1] *The Doctrine of Holy Scripture respecting the Atonement*, p. 11. [2] Isaiah liii. 3.

4. Before we close these general indications of the nature of the work of the Saviour, it must be noted that the sufferings and death endured had the sanction of God. There is no intention, in making this asseveration, of confounding the deeds of the Evil One and of wicked men with those of the thrice Holy Jehovah. He can do no wrong, and sin in His moral creatures has ever been and ever must be in antagonism to His heart, mind, and will. He loathes it with the strength of His holy heart, and iniquity cannot dwell with the Lord. He cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man. The persecution of Jesus by the chief priest, scribes, and pharisees, His betrayal by Judas, His mock trial by Pilate, and His crucifixion by the Roman soldiers, were actions not approved by the Supreme Ruler, nor were they ordained by His eternal decree. And yet God had to do with the sufferings and death, not the manner of the death, of the Lord of life.[1] This much is demanded by the most explicit averments of the Bible, as well as by the circumstances of

[1] On the death of our Lord we would refer the reader to the excellent work of Dr. Stroud, entitled *The Physical Cause of Christ's Death*, in which it is shown that crucifixion was not the physical cause of the death. When I remember the words, "No man taketh my life from me,"

the case. If it is acknowledged that this world and all its inhabitants are under the government of God, it cannot be gainsaid that natural evils must spring ultimately from His hand. This is true, in a marked manner, with reference to moral beings, who live under the perfect law of liberty, and where suffering is inflicted to express ideas regarding moral conduct. One of the designs of sacred history seems to be to make this principle of Divine moral government known, and to illustrate its operations, as, for example, in the case of Cain, Pharaoh, David, and others. The sufferings of Jesus Christ must not be excluded from the sweep of the Divine government, nor should they be viewed as if they had no relation to God's purpose and government. With a full view of the whole circumstances which would transpire, He delivered His own Son up into the position He occupied, and into the hands of wicked men. The Father sent the Son into the world to suffer by reason of sin. It was His will, wish, and determination that He should be the subject of sorrow, anguish, and

and "He through the Eternal Spirit offered up Himself," the death of Jesus is to me as marvellous as His birth. And it was the *death*, not the crucifixion, which entered as an essential element into the atonement.

death. This aspect of the mission of the Divine-man enables us to see into the heart of God, and the feelings which throbbed there. Speaking after the manner of men, the Father saw with His omniscient eye all that Christ would undergo, from the first moment of His conscious existence till He bowed His head in death. He knew, moreover, the sufferings He must experience before His work should be finished. These were dire, unspeakable, and of the most oppressive kind to the pure and devoted Son of God. In bearing them His body would be broken, and His blood shed. And yet God sent His Son into the world that all this might be experienced. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him."[1] He "brought Him down to the dust of death."[2] The cup placed in His hands, with all its bitter ingredients, was placed there by the Father, who was always pleased with the Son of His love. And in carrying out the will given Him to fulfil, He passed into utter isolation on the Cross, and from its depths He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"[3] This was in the Divine plan of the life of the Lord, and declares that He who died on Calvary was a Saviour, and that the chief part of His

[1] Isa. liii. 10. [2] Psalm xxii. 15. [3] Matt. xxvii. 46.

mission was to deal with sin by suffering, and not with the sinner by way exclusively of education and development.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST THE SIN-BEARER.

A SHORT time before the public appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, a rugged man of the desert appeared on the banks of the Jordan, who spoke to his countrymen words of warning, searching truth, and prophetic power. He was the last of the prophets of the old dispensation, and the forerunner of the new. He was a Voice, clear, articulate, and authoritative; and his utterances prove how much he had of the Spirit of the Highest, and how much he knew of the sin, the need, and the helplessness of man. John the Baptist, for to him we allude, was the greatest of the sons of men outside the kingdom of heaven; and not a little of his greatness is manifested by the way in which he spoke concerning, and acted towards, Jesus

of Nazareth. He knew that he himself was not the prophet who should come, but Christ was. He fully understood that he was not able to do for the world what Christ would accomplish. He perceived that Jesus had a relation to sin and humanity which he and no other of the family of man had. Hence that deep and significant exclamation which escaped his lips when he saw Jesus approaching him near the rapid river, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh (beareth) away the sin of the world."[1] This was repeated more than once, which indicates how strong a hold this view of Christ and His work had taken of the forerunner's mind. In the Lamb of God who bore the sin of the world he saw, with the strong faith of his strong soul, the fulfilment and substance of the preparation, prophecies, and shadows of the whole Old Testament system of sacrifice, from that of Abel down to the last lamb slain in the temple. In this he rested, and because of the One who stood before him he rejoiced.

1. The idea of bearing sin was no new idea

[1] John i. 29. The Greek word translated "taketh away," αἴρων, is part of the verb which means to take up ad carry away. It is the word used in the Septuagint corresponding to the Hebrew word נָשָׂא.

either to John the Baptist or to his hearers. The thought was a common one to the Jewish mind, and was one of those conceptions in which it was educated through doctrine and institution by the Divine Spirit. God had by the old economy and, indeed, from the beginning, been training men in the use of language and the formation of ideas, that they might be empowered to take in His full and perfected revelation when it should be made by and in His own Son. "Bearing sin" was a phrase and a thought which, consequently, were well understood and well defined. All along it had had a place in the Jewish system, and the Old Testament contained many illustrations of its meaning. We are told "whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin, and he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death."[1] "The man who forbeareth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people, because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season; that man shall bear his sin."[2] "Even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities."[3] There are other statements of a like nature in the Old Testament, which were familiar to all those who delighted

[1] Lev. xxiv. 15, 16. [2] Num. ix. 13. [3] Num. xiv. 34.

in the law of the Lord and the revelation of His will. And they all imply and enunciate the thought, that those who bore sin had sin charged to them, and suffered its punishment and results. We do not go the length of affirming, as Cave does,[1] that this is the only meaning the phrase has, but this is its prevailing and fundamental meaning. To bear sin was to be chargeable with the sin, and to bear its punishment. When the words were used in a figurative sense, they shadowed forth this idea; and when they were employed in reference to concrete cases, the sin was borne concretely, and this was equivalent to being charged with it and suffering for it. Doubtless this was the main conception which filled the mind of the Baptist when he uttered the words quoted above. These words, moreover, are not the only words which point to the same fact. In Isaiah we read, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all"; "He shall bear their iniquities," and "He shall bear the sins of many."[2] The Apostle Peter declares,

[1] *The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice*, by Alfred Cave, B.A., p. 214, Note 2. We may say, in passing, that this is a most elaborate and valuable work, and is not so well known as it deserves to be. It was published in 1877.

[2] Isaiah liii. 6, 11, 12.

in very emphatic language, that "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree;"[1] and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many."[2] The testimony is unhesitating and full. The Bible may be rejected, and the authority of its writers denied, but it cannot be rationally disputed that the Scriptures teach that Christ bore sin, the sin of the world, bore it in His own body, up to and on the tree.

2. What, then, do these representations mean? How are we to think of Christ as bearing sin, being "made sin," and being made a curse for sin? At the outset it must be acknowledged that exhaustive answers cannot be expected to these questions. The fact is too great, too mysterious, and comprehends too much of God, Christ, and man, for any one human mind to comprehend it. Enough, however, may be understood to enable the believer to render to himself and to others a reason for the hope that is within him with meekness and fear.

3. *First*, Christ bore the sin of the world by entering into and realising the world's sin as if it were His own. Of all the real transactions which have ever taken place on this earth, this

[1] 1 Peter ii. 24. [2] Heb. ix. 28.

is the most real. This is no fiction, legal or otherwise; and he who contends that it is, has failed to discern the smallest fragment of the Divine reality. Christ was made sin; sin was made His by the ordination and act of the heavenly Father. He bore it, and to Him it was imputed. And underlying all these and kindred representations is the realisation of sin by the Divine-human Saviour, and that so thoroughly that He knew it as if it were His own, and that He was chargeable with it. This does not, of course, imply that He was morally tainted with the sins of men, for moral qualities are not transferable. He was pure, sinless, and perfectly holy; He knew no sin. Neither does it mean that He suffered, as F. W. Robertson puts it, because He "came into collision with the world's evil, and bore the penalty of that daring."[1] This goes but a little way to explain the declarations of Scripture on the subject, and makes both the life of Christ and His death inexplicable. Nor do we think that Bushnell's doctrine is adequate, when he says "that Christ bore them on His feeling, became inserted into their bad lot by His sympathy as a friend."[2] He did all that and more, and it

[1] *Sermons*, Vol. I., p. 128.
[2] *Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 11.

is this something additional that gives the value to the transaction. The sins of men became His realised possession. In His Divine-human consciousness He gathered them up by entering into them, and thereby enabling them to become His burden, which He bore on His heart till it was broken and He bowed His head in death.

4. This great transaction can be best approached by means of the human analogies which, though far removed from the reality, yet point in that direction. There is such a thing in human experience as one person bearing, by entering into and realising, the sin of another. Many occurrences of everyday life illustrate this principle. There, for example, are two boys who are brothers: the one lad is wild and wicked, and the other meek, shrinking, and good. The former utters a wild oath, and acts a rude and unbecoming part. When remonstrated with he pays no attention, and seems utterly careless of all that is said to him. It is different with the other brother. His cheek burns with shame at the other's conduct, and he feels abashed and sad at heart at the sin which his brother commits. This is not an uncommon case, and it springs from the one lad taking, in a real sense, the sin of the other

into his mind, heart, and conscience. So with the wayward son of a widow, who has gone so far astray as to embrue his hands in his brother's blood. He cares not for the sin he has committed against the laws of God and man. In his cell he sits without realising his crime or feeling one pang on account of his conduct. It is different with his mother in her quiet and desolate home. "O my son," she exclaims, "my son, I am oppressed with the thought that a child of mine should have so sinned. If he had died on the battlefield, or been drowned at sea, or been taken away by disease, it would comparatively have been nothing. It is his sin, not his death, that crushes me, and will bring my grey hairs in sorrow to the grave." How can such experiences be explained? Only, we reply, by admitting that it is possible to bear sin not personally committed. And the purer and more loving the soul that stands related to the sinner, the more will it be true that it has borne the sins of others, for it will understand their nature, enormity, and sinfulness the more. Other illustrations of actual life might be cited, but these will suffice as stepping-stones to higher things.

5. Coming to Jesus Christ bearing sin, we

come to the most perfect embodiment of the principle possible. He did so with the fulness and perfection possible to no other being who ever walked this earth, and so personally and comprehensively as to have had laid upon Him the burden of the world's transgressions. It must be remembered that He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and stood in closest possible relation to all those of human-kind who had gone astray. By His all-comprehending knowledge, as the Theanthropic person, He knew the sin of the world in its principle, and the sins of the world in their number, turpitude, and sinfulness. By the Divine arrangement Jesus was sent to enter into their intensity, their awfulness, and their mystery, and by so doing have them laid on His great heart, His pure conscience, and His whole being. As Faber has it—

"Deep waters have come in, O Lord,
All darkly on Thy human soul;
And clouds of supernatural gloom
Around Thee are allowed to roll.

"Thy Spirit weighs the sins of men;
Thy science fathoms all their guilt;
Thou sickenest heavily at Thy heart,
And the pores open—blood is spilt."[1]

[1] *Hymns selected from Faber*, pp. 31, 32.

Though the language of Luther is bold, it contains a strong basis of truth when he declares, "God sent His only Son into the world, and laid upon Him the sin of all men, saying, Be thou Peter the denier, Paul the persecutor, blasphemer, and cruel oppressor; that sinner which did eat the apple in Paradise; that thief which hanged upon the cross; and, briefly, be thou the person which hath committed the sins of all men."[1] This we have said is bold language, and yet it is not bolder than some parts of the sacred word which refer to the same. In a Messianic Psalm the words are used, "Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up;"[2] which words, says Albert Barnes, mean, "He so made them His own, that it was proper He should be treated *as if* they were His, and that He might feel He was suffering *as if* they were His."[3] There was no literal transference of iniquities to the Lamb of God, but He knew them, searched them through and through, felt them as belonging to the family of man, of which He was the head and only righteous member, the one who acted for the many—for all.

[1] *Commentary*, Gal. iii. 13. [2] Psalm xl. 12.
[3] *Commentary on Psalms*, Vol. i., p. 355.

6. *Secondly*, Christ bore the sins of men by His suffering and dying for them. This is the fundamental meaning of the words "bear sin," and the one which, when forgiveness is not meant, is the only one. Dr. Magee, in a long dissertation, proves that the Hebrew words *nasa* and *sabhal*, which are equivalent to the Greek words ἄιρω and ἀναφέρω employed by the Baptist, Peter, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, signifies "the *sustaining* or *bearing the burden of that* materia pœnæ *which was due to the offences* either of the individual who suffered, or of him on whose account and in whose place he suffered."[1] In this way Jesus Christ bore sin. He took it away without doubt, but this He did by taking it upon Him and suffering for it. This is the burden of the Messianic prophecies and of the New Testament Gospels and Epistles. Christ was a sufferer, not in body and circumstances only or chiefly, but in soul. His whole career is one which was the most sorrowful ever lived, and this increased till the end. Tears were shed, sighs were heaved, strong cries were uttered, grief was felt, agony was experienced, and death was endured by God's own Son, who

[1] *Discourses and Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrines of the Atonement and Sacrifice*, Dissertation 42.

personally deserved none of these things, and whose conduct and heart could not have produced them. There never has been grief like His grief, nor sorrows like what flowed through the sensitive parts of His inner nature. His griefs sprang from causes which were hidden, and unlike those from which arise the sufferings of the rest of human hearts. Sorrow and remorse spring by the ordination of Heaven from sin; but in Jesus there was no indication of remorse, or consciousness of personal transgression. Innocency, love, integrity, were there shining through the anguish, but not the faintest trace of moral evil. How, then, can Gethsemane and the isolation of Calvary be accounted for? No solution is possible, except the one which accounts for all His sorrow and sufferings coming from the sin of the world. They were not the strict punishment of the sins, for punishment proper cannot be dissociated from personal guilt; but they were the penal consequences of sin as realised by the Saviour. The penalty of sin is the wrath of God, and this was experienced by Christ as terminating not on Himself, but on the sin which He bore. Sin and its penalty lay heavily upon the meek and the Holy One. They bruised His heart, crushed His

soul, and wounded His deepest feelings. When in the garden He seems to have felt them with horror and dismay, and on the cross they so overwhelmed, surrounded, and closed in on His experience, that He was left alone with them and made to exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"[1] an utterance at once of trust and direst isolation. At that moment His whole being was left, "as it were," to use the words of Dr. Morison, "absorbed into the act of *bearing*. All other exercises of energy seem to have been virtually suspended. Outgoings of spirit into the surrounding borderland of happy experiences, and then into the delights of conscious fellowship with His Father, were, it would appear, for the time being arrested. It was sins, sins, sins, that pressed in on this side and that, behind and before, from beneath and above, all round and round."[2] Then it was that He felt in all their enormity the iniquities of man and their bitterest desert, and died for the sins of the world. Wonderful fact! And yet nothing short of this will satisfy the demands of Scripture, or explain, even in a measure, the heart-griefs of Jesus, and more

[1] Matt. xxvii. 46.

[2] *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, p. 651.

particularly the closing scenes of His wonderful life. It is when Gethsemane is visited and Calvary is reached, that the full significance of the Baptist's words come home, when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world."[1]

CHAPTER VII.

CHRIST, HIGH PRIEST AND SACRIFICE.

God has at all times been the Educator of the race. For the purpose of doing so more efficiently, with the view of preparing the world for the advent of His Son, He selected Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the nation which sprang from their loins as His peculiar people, His chosen, His national Son. This people were specially watched over, trained, dealt with. God was their King, their government was a Theocracy, their laws were divine, and their form of worship was prescribed, even to the minutest detail. In the very centre of

[1] John i. 29.

the religious system of the Jews were placed the high priest and sacrifices, offerings, oblations, ablutions, and the like. These were for present and practical ends; but they had also a look forward, and were like finger-posts pointing to the perfect and true. They were merely tentative, educative, and were like forerunners preparing the way of the Lord, and making plain the highway of the One who was to come. By their means language had been formed, conceptions had been imparted, and terms had been defined which were necessary to make known, understand, and differentiate the work of Christ when He should appear in the fulness of the times. Thus, the sacrifices of the Old Testament are types of the One Sacrifice of the New Testament. They cannot fully explain the nature of what Christ did when He suffered death for sin. This, in the nature of the case, was impossible. As we can best understand the shadow by the substance, and a prophecy by its fulfilment, so Moses can be best understood by understanding Jesus, who shines by His own light, and derives no glory from His servants. Nevertheless, what the Old Testament records of the sacrifices of the old economy serves to illustrate what the Lamb of God was

and did when He bore away the sin of the world.

In our last chapter it was pointed out that Jesus Christ "bore sin," "bore it away," and "was made sin," both by realising it as if it were His own, and suffering for it even until death; and it is our design in this to follow up the same thought, by showing that in doing so He was a Sacrifice for human sins, transgressions, and iniquities:—

1. There can be no dispute as to the fact that Jesus Christ was a Priest—the High Priest of our profession. This is the highest office which could be held, and one which could only be entered upon by Divine appointment. The honour was too great to be self-assumed, or granted by those who were morally imperfect, and the work too sacred to be done by any who had not the approval of the Holy One. The high priest's office fitted him to deal with God for man, and with man for God—to be a mediator through whom communications could pass to the Divine ear from those whom he represented, and words from the Divine mouth to those in whose stead he appeared before the mercy-seat. He was to be taken from among men, that he might know man, and have compassion on the ignorant and the

wayward. And his chief work was to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. This was the position and duty of Aaron, the high priest of the Mosaic system, and he was a figure of Him who was to come. Besides the statements scattered throughout the New Testament, which assume that Jesus was the High Priest of man, there are distinct declarations to that effect in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which place the matter in the clearest light. He was "called of God an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." His priesthood was to be "an unchangeable priesthood," and pre-eminently He was "an High Priest of good things to come."[1] Of a truth, He possessed the characteristics necessary for this important office. He was truly human, though divine. He was not merely ceremonially holy, but ethically perfect. His pure and loving heart qualified "the Man of Sorrows" to have compassion on the distressed and the erring; and His relation at once to God and the race constituted this Priest perfect as a Mediator to deal with both. Whatever Aaron and his successors did imperfectly and figuratively, He did perfectly and really. They were the type, He was the anti-type; they

[1] Heb. v. 10; vii. 24.

were the shadow, He was the substance; they were the figures, but He was the true. What they did constantly, He did once for all, and thereby put all others aside, and became the permanent High Priest, through whom we have access by the Spirit unto the Father. "For," as it has been observed, "if He was only figuratively a Priest, then, where is the man who was really one? It will not avail to say that under the law there were real priests, from whom the name was improperly applied to Him; for if He was no Priest, then, unquestionably, they were none; unless it be maintained that they did what He could not do, and that the Jewish dispensation, instead of being only the shadow of good things to come, was, in fact, the reality of which Christianity is only the shadow; a position which we suppose few will be hardy enough to maintain."[1] If some could be found with temerity enough to maintain it, they would contradict the word of Him who cannot lie, and who, by an oath, constituted His Son the High Priest of man.

2. Every priest, in order to discharge his office, must offer sacrifice. Without this he might serve the people, proclaim the truth,

[1] *Dodds on the Incarnation*, pp. 76, 77.

wear the sacerdotal robes, and pray, but he would be no priest. That which distinguished Aaron from other Jews was that he presented to God gifts and sacrifices for sin, and that he alone of all the nation had the authority to do so. "This all would admit," says Maurice, "was his principal, his characteristic function; whatever else he did must find its explanation in this. The men from whom he was taken, the men for whom he stood, required that he should present their gifts and their sin-offerings to Him from whom they believed their good things came, to Him against whom they believed they had sinned. If he was God's priest, if the office was not a dream, it was not only *man* who demanded the gifts and the sacrifices, God demanded them, God appointed them."[1]

It is not with all the gifts and sacrifices offered under the law of Moses we have to do at present, but only with those which were presented to God for sin, and in order to forgiveness and reconciliation. These were numerous, striking, of marked importance, and of a piacular character. The whole book of Leviticus might be quoted in proof of this statement, and to it we refer those who have

[1] *The Doctrine of Sacrifice*, pp. 270, 271.

any doubts as to what is advanced. A few passages are all that need be culled from the Scriptures as specimens of the general teaching on the subject. "Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of the altar once a year with the blood of the sin-offering of atonements."[1] "He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him."[2] A typical case is given, when it is enacted, "When a ruler hath sinned, he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish; and he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat and kill it; it is a sin-offering; and the priest shall take of the blood, and shall make atonement for him concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him."[3] These passages teach that the priest's work was to sacrifice, and to sacrifice for sin. His priestly duties were to appear before God for the sins of others and his own sin, and to treat with Him on account of them, not through word, supplication, or confession, but by means of animals slain in sacrifice, blood shed and life taken away.

What the typical priest did in a figure, the

[1] Exodus xxx. 10. [2] Leviticus i. 4.
[3] Leviticus iv. 22-26.

High Priest, not of the Jews only, but of humanity, did really. Jesus, in fulfilling the office of the priesthood, offered a Sacrifice for sin, the sin of the world. That Sacrifice was not an animal, or goat, or lamb, but Himself. He was priest and victim in one, the offerer and the offering. To this the Scriptures bear unequivocal testimony, and so plainly that he that runneth may read. Isaiah testified that "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin."[1] John the Baptist, as we have seen, pointed Jesus out as the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."[2] Jesus Himself said to His Apostles, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for the remission of sins."[3] In the epistles we read, "Christ our passover sacrificed for us," "Christ hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice unto God."[4] We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."[5] "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down

[1] Isa. liii. 10. [2] John i. 29. [3] Matt. xxvi. 28.
[4] 1 Cor. v. 7. [5] Eph. v. 2.

on the right hand of God."[1] The Sacrifice of Christ for sin, while it constitutes the burden of the verbal revelation which has been vouchsafed to man on earth, occupies the thoughts and hearts of the redeemed in heaven. Those who have been taken home can find no higher theme of praise than this glorious fact; for the song which is ever new and old rises to the ear of the One who was dead and is alive again. "Unto Him who loved us, and washed us from our sin in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."[2] Sacrifice is the subject of the thoughts of the church militant, and of the church regnant. It is the object of faith and trust here, and shall be the object of praise for evermore. It is therefore no subordinate part of the Christian religion, or of Christ's mission, but one of the most important factors of the work which He wrought out for human salvation.

Christ, then, is a Sacrifice, a Sacrifice for sin. What does this imply? In answer to this question it is said that sacrifice is "involved in the very original of the universe;" "in the very nature and being of God;" "was expressed

[1] Heb. x. 11, 12. [2] Rev. i. 5, 6.

in the Divine obedience of the Son before the worlds were,"[1] and is the law of all moral being. It is self-surrender, it is contended; submission to the Divine will; a living for another, not for self. It is further maintained that in obedience to this law of created and uncreated moral being, Christ came into this world and lived a pure, unselfish, and filial life, thoroughly surrendered His will to the Divine will, and revealed the Father, that those for whom He suffered might know Him and have eternal life. Very beautiful, and very true as well, we reply; but it falls short of the whole truth, indeed, leaves out of sight altogether the main element of the truth embodied in sacrifice. The sacrifice described by the theologians who speak as above may answer to a *living* sacrifice, one of holy love and life; but it has no affinity to the sacrifices which were for sin, and consisted not in living simply but *mainly in suffering and dying*. The sufferings and death of Christ, as well as the obedience which underlay both, constituted His Sacrifice, the sacrifice of Himself. He sacrificed Himself, the innermost part of His being—the will as well as the life which flowed from it. In doing so He was both active and passive, obeyed and

[1] *The Doctrine of Sacrifice*, by F. D. Maurice, p. 119.

suffered. It was the Father's will that He should become man and bear the sins of those whose nature He assumed. In carrying out that will He emptied himself of His glory, took on Him the form of a servant, entered into the lowest conditions of social life, was despised, rejected, and ill-treated by men, tempted and assaulted by the devil and his angels, surrendered Himself to bear the manifestation of the Divine wrath against the sin He bore, which like fire filled His whole soul, and ultimately died, and through dying perfected the Sacrifice. In all this He obeyed, and delighted to do the will of God; but the Sacrifice was not the obedience as obedience, it was that which He did and endured in obeying. The offering of Himself in sacrifice was something which could not have been done in heaven, though obedience was possible there, nor is it something which He does now that He is with the Father. Jesus did not offer a Sacrifice for sin in heaven previous to the Incarnation, though the will of the Son was and ever shall be in perfect harmony with the all-perfect will. It was what He endured for sin in this world, and prior to and in His death that constituted the Sacrifice. On the Cross it was completed, for then the blood was shed, the life was yielded up because

of sin; but the obedience of God's Son shall never be completed—shall never end. As the animal was sacrificed of old, when its blood was shed and its carcase destroyed, so Christ as the antitype sacrificed himself unto God when He bore the sins of the world, till His body was broken, his blood was shed, and His life taken away. This is the one Sacrifice for the iniquities of men which the High Priest has offered, and by means of which He has cast down all the altars and done away with all the burnt-offerings of the old economy. And it is this which secures the remission of sins and the peace and joy of God.

3. The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ atones for sin. In the quotations made from the Old Testament it is stated that the priest in offering the goat, the lamb, or the ox as a burnt-offering for sin, made atonement for sin. This is a prevailing doctrine of the Books of Exodus and Leviticus, and is the one which gave significance to the rite in ancient times. The Jews, like all others of the family of Adam sinned; they did so constantly and freely. In their hearts and consciences they felt that they had incurred guilt and deserved penalty. God could not approve of them, they did not approve of themselves. There ensued therefore a sep-

aration between them and their King and God, which could not be done away with by any mere wilful act of their own. There was only one method by which they could obtain forgiveness, and that was not of their own devising. It was instituted by God himself out of mercy, and that was by sacrifice and atonement.[1] Without shedding of blood there could be no remission. On the great day of the atonement two goats were selected by the high priest "for a sin-offering."[2] One of the two was slain, and the blood was taken and sprinkled on the mercy-seat to "make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins." The other goat was to be treated differently, but very significantly. The Lord commanded Aaron to lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, putting them upon the head of the goat; "and

[1] Space forbids us considering the disputed question as to the origin of sacrifice. It is contended by some that it is Divine in its origin, by others that it is human. The truth seems to me to be in accounting for it by a Divine revelation meeting a deep want in man's nature. Of course the Mosaic sacrifices, and those which went before, were approved of, and in the former case appointed.

[2] Lev xvi.

the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited." In this way atonement was made and the sins were banished away, that pardon and reconciliation might be enjoyed. The separation between the sinner and his God was destroyed, and the conscience so far set at rest. This is acted religion, outward deeds of a symbolical character which make known the ground of forgiveness and its actual enjoyment. The blood made atonement for sin, and the forgiveness, resting on the condition of confession, removed it from the sinner as a condemning power. He was saved, and in the transaction God was honoured.

These things prefigure the Atonement made by the Saviour, and the way that forgiveness becomes the sinner's. The word atonement is now ambiguous, but as it appears in the Old Testament it had a definite meaning. The Hebrew word rendered to atone means literally "to cover," and atonement means "a covering." [1]

[1] "The idea expressed by the Hebrew original," says Cave, "of the word translated *atone* was *cover* and *covering;*" and he adds the following from Kahnis: "To atone (literally to cover up) does not mean to cause a sin not to be committed, for that is impossible; nor to represent it as non-existent, for that would be opposed to the earnest spirit of the law; nor to pay and compensate it by any act; but to

Etymologically the English word "atonement" is equivalent to reconciliation—at-one-ment, and has this import in the one place where it is found in the English version of the New Testament. Theologically it is used to designate the work of Christ as the ground of pardon and salvation, in harmony with its Old Testament meaning. It is in this sense that it is employed when we say Christ atoned for sin: His Sacrifice has covered it. It is no longer the condemning thing that it would have been if Christ had not died. Over sin, as covered by the sacrificial blood of Christ, God is ready to meet with the guiltiest and most degraded, and remit their sins, and remove them as far from their souls as the east is from the west. This was the faith of the Apostles of our Lord, and they never wearied in making it known. Apart from this they had no glad tidings, no Gospel. They knew that the existence of sin was the sad fact of the world; and against this they ever placed the one Sacrifice for sins, whose blood covered iniquity, and could impart new life and new joy. This was the foundation on which they built, and because of it they were

cover it before God,—that is, to deprive it of its power to come between us and God." *Scripture Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 139.

strong in the Lord, and mighty for good in the world.

4. The treatment of this subject would be incomplete if it were not noticed that Christ offered the Sacrifice of Himself as the representative of man. Aaron was a man, but he also represented men. He stood in the room and stead of the whole Jewish nation, and was their vicar, their substitute, or their representative. What he did generally was for others, and what he did, as on the great day of atonement, was for the whole nation including himself. When he sprinkled the blood on the altar, it was on behalf of the people; when he passed into the Holy of Holies to commune with Jehovah, it was for the people. This office was a public one, and its duties were discharged for those who could not themselves do the same. This principle of representation and substitution is common, and has a foundation in the nature of human society and life. It is to be found almost everywhere, and has been practically recognised in all nations and all ages. The king or governor represents the subjects and the governed, the ambassadors the kings, the parents the children, the judges the State, and the lawmakers the people. Adam was the representative and substitute

of the whole race which descended from him; and Aaron and the priests acted for men, in their room and stead. Christ is the highest and most perfect fulfilment of this law, which is, though limited, common, and even needful for human society. When as the High Priest He offered up Himself as a Sacrifice for sin, He did so for all the world. The work was vicarious and representative, and was done for those who could not have done it and live, in their room and stead, that "whosoever believeth in Him might not perish but have everlasting life."[1] When "one died for all, all died."[2] And it is the privilege of each to turn their thoughts believingly to Calvary, and say, as the Apostle of the Gentiles said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."[3]

[1] John iii. 16.

[2] 2 Cor. v. 14. Our version reads "then were all dead;" but this is not a correct rendering of the original word ἀπέθανον, which is in the aorist tense, and signifies literally "they died."

[3] Gal. ii. 20.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRIST: PROPITIATORY AND A PROPITIATION.

THE higher an object of nature is in the scale of being, it is the more complex and difficult to understand. In the animal world the lowest species are the simplest, and as species rise they differ in organisation, members, and completeness. Man, who stands at the highest point, is the most wonderful of all creatures, and being most highly developed, his body is the most complex organism which the earth contains. Because of its complexity and its all but innumerable organs, with their intricacies and functions, it is looked upon by those who understand it best as "fearfully and wonderfully made." The physical sciences gather around man's physical frame, and will be near completion when it is fully understood.

This is true also with regard to spiritual things. What is simple and easily understood is not of the highest order of fact or doctrine. The more important and powerful a truth or fact is, the more difficult will it be to apprehend its nature, and to form concerning it a

scientific conception. Practically considered, such a doctrine as that of the Trinity, for example, is not difficult to believe in, but to understand it and its relations to the rest of the Christian system is a very difficult task. It draws deep, runs back into eternity and out to infinity. The same may be said of the work of Christ as an Atonement for sins. The subject is comprehensive. It has many sides, many relations, many uses, and many analogies. The sacred writers in treating it, do so in various ways. They walk, as it were, round and round Christ and His work, describe it on this side and on that, and employ all possible illustrations and figures to set it before their readers in its completeness. We must follow them as they exhibit its many sides, if we are to see with our own eyes what they beheld of the glory of the Redeemer. Some phases of the Atonement have been already considered, and another important phase demands attention, that which represents Christ and His work as "Propitiatory" and a "Propitiation."

While the idea expressed by these words runs like a scarlet thread through the doctrinal parts of the New Testament Scriptures, the words themselves are applied to the Lord

and His saving work in more passages than one. John the beloved declares that "He is the propitiation (ἱλασμός) for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world;" "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."[1] Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, in unfolding the doctrine of justification and redemption, says that it is "in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation (ἱλαστήριον) through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare at this time His righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."[2] As pointed out, there are two Greek words translated, in the passages quoted, by the one English word propitiation. The one which is used by John is a noun signifying expiation, propitiation (the abstract being used for the concrete,—propitiator), from the verb meaning to reconcile to one's-self, to pacify. Paul uses not a noun, but a neuter adjective, and this has perplexed some writers not a little. Dr. Carpenter and other Unitarians prefer

[1] 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10.
[2] Rom. iii. 24-26.

the translation "mercy-seat," which is the rendering given to the same word in the only other place where it occurs in the New Testament.[1] Besides the figure of Christ being a "mercy-seat through faith in His blood" being incongruous, this rendering leaves the difficulty where it was, and cannot be defended as expressing the original term better. Maurice contends that "our rendering is on the whole a right and satisfactory one."[2] A Unitarian writer puts the matter thus. He says, "Any one who will turn up to ἱλαστήριον in Robinson's or Schleusner's Lexicon, will see that the term in itself considered admits of either translation—propitiatory sacrifice or 'mercy-seat,'—according as θῦμα or ἐπίθεμα is supposed to be the implied noun to be connected with the adjective. But as the death of Christ is in several passages of the New Testament compared to a sacrifice, and never to a mercy-seat—unless this passage be an exception—we believe, with Professor Stuart and the most modern critics, that propitiatory sacrifice is the true rendering. Besides, it cannot be denied that ἱλαστήριον is capable of being rendered mercy-seat only

[1] Heb. ix. 5.

[2] *Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 152.

because it denotes literally the propitiatory lid or cover of the ark of the covenant, and this lid or cover was propitiatory only because the blood of the sacrificed animal was sprinkled upon it; so that it is doubtful whether there will be much difference in the general meaning whichever translation may be preferred, 'whom God hath set forth a propitiatory cover' or 'propitiatory sacrifice.'" Dr. Morison translates it by the word "propitiatory," and says "its simple adjectival force in the passage is really all that can be desired." "It comprehends," he adds, "and harmonises, indeed, all that is aimed at in all the other interpretations; but it embraces them in the ampler folds of that indefinite applicability that is characteristic of its own peculiar adjectival import. If Christ Jesus be set forth as *propitiatory*, then it must be true that He was set forth as a *propitiator*, and set forth as a *propitiation* and as a *propitiatory sacrifice*, and set forth as *the* antitypical fulfilment of all the symbols of propitiation that were divinely instituted under the preceding dispensations. It was Christ Himself in His Theanthropic personality that was thus propitiatory." [1] The rendering

[1] *A Critical Exposition of the Third Chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, p. 304.

of Dr. Morison is preferable on philological and other grounds, but either translation brings out in substance what Paul evidently meant, and proves that to his inspired thought Christ was a propitiation and propitiatory. He was this that justification might be a possibility, redemption an experience, and God be just and the justifier of those who believe.

1. The first thing which must be noticed in elucidating the truth made known by John and Paul on this aspect of Christ's work is, that it originated in the love of God. Both apostles trace the gift of Christ as a propitiation and propitiatory to the love and the purpose of God. The mission was determined, and the gift was bestowed, by the divine Father. His love to man, sinful and unworthy of mercy, was so great, that "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." [1] By this method the heart of God is laid bare, and it is the privilege of the rebel to look into it, and behold the Divine emotions which yearn over him and all his lost brethren. God is not his enemy, but his friend; his first, best, and truest friend. For, as John Byrom sings—

> "If the tenderest mother were possessed
> Of all the love within her single breast

[1] Rom. viii. 32.

> Of all the mothers since the world began,
> 'Tis nothing to the love of God to man."

How, then, can those who oppose the doctrine of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ assert that it either, on the one hand, purchased the love or mercy of God for man, or, on the other, represents the Father as the enemy of man and Christ the friend? And yet this is done in language as strong as it is erroneous. "The mercy of Christ," says a writer, "is lovely, love-worthy, love-inspiring. But the substitution view of the Father compels us to wish there was no Father, makes us wonder why He could not have been more Christ-like."[1] Those who write or think after this fashion must have very distorted views of the work of Christ, and of the relation of the Father to that work and to man; for the proper view is one which is lovely, tender, and morally pathetic. It presents a portraiture of the heavenly Father which is so fatherly and perfect as to elicit the adoration and reverence of all those who look upon it. If it had been otherwise, the doctrine of the Atonement would, in the case of all those who believed in it, have produced terror and alarm instead of peace and

[1] *An Inquiry and Examination concerning Atonement by Satisfaction*, p. 5.

hope. No view of the Divine reality should for one moment be entertained which antagonises the declaration made by Jesus to Nicodemus, "God so loved the world as to give His own Son."[1] Love shines in all creation, is reflected by the sun, moon, stars, trees, rivers, and flowers. It mingles with all the providences of everyday life. But it is no where seen in its depth, strength, and sweetness as on Calvary, where the Son in His death reveals the Father that our hearts might be satisfied.

2. The love of God could not be manifested to man without a Propitiation. Speculation as to the possibilities of the Eternal should at all times lie outside the thoughts of finite minds. As the hand of a babe cannot lay hold on the sun, the will of the creature cannot arrest the movement of the tides or the earth, or the mind of man cannot comprehend one single thing—so far less can the child of a few years know God to perfection, and tell all the possibilities of the Divine action. The reason, therefore, why it may be postulated that the love of God could not reach man without a propitiation being offered, is not an *à priori* one, but is found in the fact that by the Divine

[1] John iii. 16.

purpose and love such a propitiation has been provided and offered in Christ Jesus. The fact has transpired, and the reason of it must be worthy of the infinite mind and heart.

God loves the world of mankind sinners, He has always loved them, and still He must needs receive from the strong Son of His love in human nature a propitiation to satisfy His heart, which longs for perfection, and to avert the outflow of His wrath, before the sinful could be justified and restored to His family and to His home. The Atonement "is never," says Dr. Symington, "regarded as necessary to produce in God love toward man, but is necessary to His love being manifested. It is not looked upon as that which *renders* God placable, but that which renders the *exercise* of His placability consistent with the other perfections of His nature. It does not *procure* the Divine favour, but *makes way* for this favour being shown in the pardon of sin."[1] This may seem at first sight paradoxical, but it is no contradiction; and the principle which harmonises what is apparently opposed, displays the unity, the love, and the holiness of Jehovah.

[1] *On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ*, pp. 9, 10.

The case stands thus: God is the thrice Holy Jehovah, whose whole nature is set against moral evil, sin. He cannot look upon sin but with loathing and abhorrence, and iniquity cannot dwell with Him. Of His own good pleasure He has instituted a moral system, of which He is the Head and Governor. To all His moral creatures He sustains the relation of Father and Sovereign, or, better still, He is a fatherly Sovereign. By their creation He has pledged Himself that He will give them all things requisite for their development, well-being, and the exercise of those powers by which they are endowed. The light needed will be vouchsafed, the influences required will be granted, and the Spirit, without which the finite mind could not think a right thought, entertain a right emotion, or do a right action, will be given. From His creatures He demanded obedience, and to them He gave what was necessary for this end, for their hearts' purest affection, and their spirits' constant service. Man was so treated when he was created and placed in the garden of Eden to keep and dress it. Adam was a son of God, and a subject of moral government. His duty and chief privilege were to love, honour, and obey Him in whose image he was made. So

long as he did so there were holy joy in his bosom, peace in his conscience, righteousness in his will, and spiritual life in his whole inner being. His communion was with the Father, and on his body and soul the rays of the Divine Sun fell, gilding and adorning the whole man. No fellowship could be more intimate, and no soul could be more blessed. In the element of the Divine love, consciously experienced, he lived and moved and had his being.

But, alas, man did not remain in this Edenic condition. The dark cloud rose over his soul, and before the tempter's power he stumbled and fell. From that moment all was changed; a revolution was accomplished whose effects terminated on God, man, and the whole moral empire, for sin is no trifling thing. It is an insult to God, is an evil power in the universe, and produces disintegration wherever its influence extends. Its history, as recorded in the Bible, and even in the so-called secular histories of the nations of the earth, bears testimony to its exceeding sinfulness, and to its power to produce misery, moral and physical degradation, disease and death. This evil thing man made his own by choice. He transgressed the law, crossed the desires, and ran counter to the will of His Creator, Father,

and King. Condemnation, derangement, and a sense of separateness from the Holy One were experienced, and Satan was acknowledged master. On man in this condition God could not look with pleasure, even as an artist could not look with delight upon a blurred copy of his greatest work. To man He could not act in love, for this would be doing injustice to His own character, injustice to those whose interests were at stake, and injustice to the sinner himself. The laws of moral being prevented such action on the part of the supreme Father and Maker, and evoked within His bosom the holy wrath, which is not a passion, but a principle of the Divine nature. "God when He's angry here with any one, His wrath is free from perturbation." And yet it must be averted before the love of benevolence can be manifested. God owes, if we may thus speak, this to Himself. It is demanded by the pure, moral creatures who have ever been true to the right and the loving; and it is required ere even the fallen can be brought back to their allegiance, and to their standing as children. Without a propitiation which expresses the Divine estimate of what man should have been, and of the evil and ill-desert of his sin, the love of the

Divine heart, which is the life's-blood of the human soul, could not reach the sinner, and renew the image and the likeness in which he was originally made. This was necessary, not to awaken love, but because of love; not for the satisfaction of a desire to punish, or for avenging a personal insult, but from a love of holiness and souls. In other words, God could not act towards the violators of His law as if they had never fallen without a propitiation, except He had been willing to contradict His nature, misrepresent His character, and impress those who had sinned with the idea that He loved sin as much as holiness, and rebels as much as loyal subjects. God, because He is God, must needs receive a propitiation to avert His holy indignation against sin, before He could exhibit His love to the sinner. Punishment, which is no arbitrary infliction of suffering, but an appropriate symbol of a true thought, must fall on the transgressor, except there be a propitiatory atonement which answers the same ends, and declares God to be just while He pardons those who believe.

3. Such a Propitiation has been provided in Christ and His work of Atonement. He has magnified the law and made it honourable,

by His life of constant and faultless obedience. In all that He did and said He exhibited in actual life God's idea of man, and thereby satisfied the righteousness of the Eternal, and by His sufferings and death He exhibited His estimate of sin even more fully than the condemnation of the race would have done. Behold the Saviour of man, the gift of God, and the brother of the fallen children of Adam! He is set forth, publicly declared as propitiatory, that He might live a pure, normal, human life, bear sin, suffer for it with a sorrow and anguish that brought death in their train. In that suffering and death the spotless and holy King of kings made known the judgment He formed of transgression, and His determination to uphold the laws and government of His kingdom. Such an expression of His holy will as was manifested in Christ, was satisfactory to the supreme Magistrate of the universe and the holy heart of the heavenly Father, and serves as the ground on which punishment can be dispensed with and salvation granted. "Let us never forget that this sacrifice satisfies all who look to it aright. God scans it with the eye of justice, and looking through and through it He says, 'I am well pleased.' Angels have examined it with

delight for eighteen hundred years and more. The spirits of the redeemed, with all their matured understanding, make this the burden of their song day and night. All on earth who are instructed in the nature of their own guilt, and look upon Jesus as the satisfaction for that guilt, are satisfied."[1] Besides, there is in all this no desire for vengeance, no determination to have suffering no matter who the sufferer is. On the contrary, there is an upholding of law, honour, justice, and righteousness at an expense of self-sacrifice on the part of the Father and Son, of which the finite mind can have little or no conception.

Let us, if we dare, look at this through an illustration. There, for example, is a father, noble, loving, and good. He has a large family, whom he has provided for, watched, tended with affection and care. As they grow up one by one they go astray, break the laws of the home, waste the property of the parents, spend their substance on riotous living, and traduce the character of their father and mother among the neighbours and those in their employ. All the children go into this prodigal life with the exception of the eldest son, who has ever remained dutiful and loving, and who was

[1] *The Complete Works* of Dr. John Kirk, Vol. I., p. 532.

beloved of the father. As the father and eldest son sit one day in their room, they think of the prodigals, and how they can be restored. This could only be done, in love and justice to all, by some method by means of which the father's character could be vindicated, his hatred of the bad deeds of his children made known, the laws by which his household was governed honoured, and the restoration of the rebellious children to their filial condition secured. Any plan of restoration which did not work out all these ends would be insufficient, and produce more evil than good. Now if the son could so act and suffer representatively, as to do all these things, he would not make his father love his wayward children, but he would propitiate, in the sense of enabling him wisely and lovingly to restrain his righteous indignation, secure the ends of the infliction of his threatenings, and allow his mercy to extend through him to those who had so sinned against his love and good name. The illustration is imperfect; for man is not God, and the best of parents are infinitely removed from the majesty, holiness, and love of the heavenly Father and King. But it may serve to lead some to catch a glimpse of the great transaction which took

place when Jesus Christ the righteous became the "propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."[1]

CHAPTER IX.

CHRIST, REDEEMER AND RANSOM.

ONE of the standing objections which is urged against the doctrine of the Atonement, as defined and vindicated in these pages, is, that it formed no part of the teachings of the Lord Jesus. We are assured that "Christ himself hardly uses, even in a figure, the word sacrifice; never with the least reference to His own life or death."[2] "It is clear," observes Richard Wright, "Jesus Christ gave no countenance to the popular notion of atonement, but taught an opposite doctrine."[3] Some have maintained that, if it has a foundation in the Scriptures at all, it is not in the words of Jesus, who

[1] 1 John ii. 2.
[2] *Jowett on Paul's Epistles*, Vol. II., p. 556.
[3] *The Free Grace of God*, p. 62.

was the Master, but only in the writings of His servants, the Apostles. To these objections we reply, *First*, that the mission of Jesus when in the flesh was not to formulate or teach the doctrine of the atonement, but to work the fact out by His life, sufferings, and death. *Secondly*, that the full doctrine could not be made known until Christ could say "It is finished." *Thirdly*, that there were things concerning Christ which were to be revealed to the Apostles after His death, resurrection, and ascension, which they could not bear when He was in their midst. And, *fourthly*, that on many occasions, and in diverse ways, the Lord did reveal the end and nature of His work, and its relation to the salvation and redemption of mankind. Those who will study with care the words which fell from the gracious lips of the Son of Man, will discover that in no obscure manner did He ever and anon speak of His death as the ground of pardon, life, salvation. This He did in a special manner when He told His apostles, who longed to sit on thrones and enjoy the blessings of the kingdom, that His mission was "not to be ministered to, but to minister, and give His life a ransom for many."[1]

[1] Matt. xx. 28.

Although there were no other statements in the Gospels of a like nature, this one would prove what the evangelical Christian believes to be true regarding the death of Christ as an Atonement for sin.

Christ is a Ransom, and on account of this redemption may be experienced. These ideas are found in many parts of the sacred volume, and were familiar both to Jesus and to His apostles. Besides the passage already produced, the following may be considered: "There is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all."[1] "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."[2] "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."[3] These are from Paul's epistles, and Peter, in his epistle, writes to the strangers scattered abroad to the effect, that they were "redeemed" with "the precious blood of Christ."[4] And John, in his wonderful Revelation, makes known the new song which was sung unto Him who had redeemed us to God by His blood. Ransom and its correlate, redemption—the one given by Christ, and the other experienced by man—have occupied the

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 6. [2] Rom. iii. 24. [3] Gal. iv. 4, 5. [4] 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

minds of the Saviour and His apostles on earth, and are the burden of the song of the host of God's elect in heaven.

What do these representations imply? In answer to this question, we reply:—

1. Man, because of sin, is in bondage. This is not the verdict of the Bible only, but is the testimony of all history, and the evidence borne by all consciousness. He who would deny the existence of sin might as reasonably deny the existence of the sun in the firmament, or the earth on which he dwells. Sin is a fact, and has been a potent power in the human world which has been recognised by all classes and conditions of men in all ages of the world. Heathen and Christian, civilised and savage, thoughtful and careless, sage and simpleton, have all, in one manner or another, confessed that they have sinned, done the wrong, broken the moral law of their being, and the universe said *No* to God. They have gone out of the way, and been, by their own act, sold under sin. It has, as it were, become a master, a very tyrant, holding them in chains, heavy and strong. By violating the law, which is the authoritative declaration of the Supreme Ruler, man has become guilty, blameworthy, and liable to the punishment

threatened. He has earned wages, and "the wages of sin is death."[1] To this he has given himself over, and by this he has become bound. Arising out of the condemnation of the law, there is a moral bondage of a degrading and moral nature. "The proposition that sin is itself the punishment of sin embodies the truth that man, by sin, subjects himself to a moral fatalism, a *misera necessitas mali*, expressed by our Lord in the words, 'Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.'"[2] This truth is fearfully illustrated in the outer spheres of life by those who become victims to vices which lay a firm hold on the body as well as the soul. But in the inner nature sin has power over man as well. It is there that it does reign, and its sceptre is hard and relentless. Those who are under it are not subjects but slaves, moral slaves bound by chains formed of evil habits, and originating in the fires of consuming passion. This is the condition of all those who have sinned against law and light and love. They may not be to the same extent blameworthy, deserving of punishment, and subjects to sin. But having sinned they are condemned, burdened with death, and held

[1] Rom. vi. 23.

[2] Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 209.

by the grasp of the Divine ordinance which says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die."[1] Consequences result from this state which tend to a lower depth of experience, and to a condition of slavery which is the saddest on which the eye of God or angel can look. And this is the position of man as portrayed by the inspired writers. It is one which must be considered before the salvation provided for him in Christ Jesus will be appreciated. Right views of sin are necessary to right views of redemption.

2. The redemption of man from this state of bondage is achieved by the Ransom given by Christ Jesus. There is not one hint given in the Bible that man by his own act, his prayers, faith, works, repentance, or development, can rescue his own soul, or deliver himself from the bondage in which he is held. All these things are right and becoming in their place, and efficient, too, for certain ends, but these ends are not those which are expressed by either the words redemption or salvation. A prisoner, even under imperfect human governments, never opened his cell doors, and did away with the condemnation of the law by promises of good behaviour, or any sorrow

[1] Ezek. xviii. 4.

that he had for his crime; and far less would promises of amendment and sorrow undo the condemnation of the Divine law and the bondage of sin and Satan. There was a needs be for something more before redemption could be enjoyed, and this something is the ransom given by the Man Christ Jesus, as the Mediator between God and man.

A ransom is that which is paid or given in order to the deliverance of those held in captivity. It is the purchase price of freedom, and the condition or ground of actual deliverance. In ancient times those taken in war or held in slavery could regain their freedom only when a ransom was paid down. This deliverance would not have been called redemption except a ransom had been given, for it derived this designation because of the manner in which it was achieved. "To the people in our Lord's time the payment of ransoms was the subject of very definite relations. Some of these regulations were probably obsolete, but they were not unknown. To a Jew a ransom was the money a man paid to recover possession of his inheritance when he had parted with it;[1] it was the price he paid when he purchased the freedom of any that was 'nigh of

[1] Lev. xxv. 25, 27.

kin to him,' who had become a slave to a stranger;[1] . . . it was the half shekel which every man over twenty years of age had to pay at the census to avert Divine judgments—'atonement money'—'a price every man paid for his life.'"[2]

These transactions among men, which were much more familiar to the Jewish ear and mind than to those who dwell in the land on whose soil no slave can set his foot and remain a slave, were taken by Christ and His apostles to set forth a phase of His own gracious work for the recovery of man. Doubtless the Saviour lifted the words out of the low level and the unholy associations in which they were commonly employed. By them He did not intend to teach that in all respects the ransom He paid was like the ransom paid to those who held prisoners in war or their fellows in slavery. No one would contend that He had this in view when He said He would give Himself a ransom for many. The words were used figuratively, but not without meaning; symbolically, but not without a truth to make known. There was an appropriateness in the illustration or figure, or else the Prince of

[1] Lev. xxv. 47, 49.

[2] Num. xviii. 15. *The Atonement*, p. 76, by R. W. Dale, M.A.

preachers and teachers would not have used it. It represented a true thought to Christ's own mind, and this thought He wished others to share in. And this thought is that the sacrifice of His life was valuable in relation to God's law, the universe, and man, and answered in the sphere of government the place of a ransom on account of which man might be redeemed. This much is clearly implied, and less than this would render the words meaningless, and the figure as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. "The ransom is a ransom, and is so called because of its *value*, on the one hand, and because its value was to be available, on the other, for release."[1] The giving of the life of Christ in sacrifice for sin and sinners was worth to God and the moral universe far more than the final and eternal condemnation of sinners would have been.

The element of punishment is needed in all governments. Sin and holiness, vice and virtue, crime and obedience, would be for ever confounded in the estimation of both ruler and ruled if there were no punishment threatened and due to the violators of the law. Such infliction of suffering and loss is needed to

[1] *Commentary on Matthew's Gospel*, by Dr. James Morison, p. 395.

express the mind of the lawgiver, his estimate of the evil done; to uphold the honour of the law and the interests of the governed. Its value, therefore, is great, and, in the moral universe of God, of unspeakable moment. But Christ's death is of greater value still. It has moral worth which transcends in importance the penalty of the law, and has a spiritual influence of a redeeming kind which punishment never could exercise. It makes known the holiness and the justice of the Eternal; it demonstrates that the law is holy, just, and good; that sin is evil, intense, awful, and death-bringing; that filial loyalty to God is the duty and privilege of all; and that He who sits on the throne is determined that sin shall be put down only in righteousness, let the consequences be what they may. Besides, it has secured the influence of the Holy Ghost, and all the means necessary to the subjugation of evil in the soul and the impartation of the Divine life. Answering all these and other ends in the government of God, the sufferings and death of Christ for sin was a ransom of moral value by means of which redemption may come to the sinners and the ungodly, even the remission of sins. Through this means they may be brought back to God, as to their

standing and their character,—redeemed from the curse of the law and from all iniquity. This is salvation, the being made whole, and has a legal and ethical aspect, both of which are met by the one ransom, given by the one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.

3. To this doctrine objections have been urged, the consideration of which will enable us to elucidate the truth more clearly.

(1.) It is said that if such a Ransom has been given by Christ as the meritorious ground of deliverance, it must have been given to the devil, for he, not God, kept man as a sinner in bondage. This has been put forth as an objection by those who deny the propitiatory nature of Christ's work; and in proof of its validity and strength they point to some of the early fathers of the church, who admitted that Satan received the ransom. Not believing in the infallibility of the fathers, early or late, their opinions do not trouble us on this or any other subject. So that we have no hesitation in affirming that to the extent they held that Satan received the ransom of Christ, to that extent they erred, not knowing the Scriptures. Satan held men, it is true, but he held them illegally and unjustly, through sin, and this

sin brought them under the law and its curse. His power over them was moral, not legal, and both Satan and transgressors were responsible to God as governor, and as representing all those He governed.[1] It was the King immortal and invisible, the only true God, who required, before He could manifest His love and extend His mercy to the fallen race, to have, though He provided it in the person of His own Son, a ransom of moral value equivalent to the sanction of the law which was broken. He received it, and no other one could.

(2.) It is further urged, that if God received the Ransom, it would follow that man was redeemed *from* God, and not, as Scripture represents, *to* God. This objection receives its force from pressing the analogy too close, and from overlooking an important distinction. It is by no means impossible for the same person to pay the ransom and redeem those in the

[1] Anselm deals with this subject in *Cur Deus Homo*, chapter vii., in which he shows "that the devil had no just cause against man; how it is that he may seem to have had, and why God should have delivered man in this way." He says, Satan and man, "each of them was a thief, since the one, at the other's persuasion, had stolen himself from the Lord." The devil was a resetter, and the taking man from God was taking what did not belong to him. He, therefore, had no right to receive a ransom.

bondage of law from and to himself. Take the case of a judge or ruler. He has brought before him, let us suppose, his own child, a young man who has committed some serious crime. The law has put its hand firmly on the culprit, and he is under its condemning power. The father, representing the law, sentences the son to imprisonment, which sentence admits of commutation by the payment of a fine. This fine is paid by the elder brother by the command of the father, with money provided by him, and it thus may be termed a ransom to deliver the criminal from the punishment he deserved. In this case the same person acted throughout, but he acted as sustaining different relations, and provided the ransom which redeemed his son from himself and to himself. As ruler he condemned his son and held him by the law, and as father he redeemed his erring one to himself from the penalty pronounced, that he might be one of his family circle. There is no contradiction in all this; nor would there be either want of love, justice, or wisdom, provided all interests could be preserved intact. So, in like manner, is it with the Supreme Judge and heavenly Father. Acting as ruler He maintained the authority of law, and held the sinner under its power,

As Father, His eye pitied, and His heart moved with compassion as he saw His moral creatures in a state of sin and death. In harmony with love, righteousness, and justice, He said, "Deliver from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom."[1] "Thus it is," as Gilbert remarks, "rationally and clearly consistent to say that Christ, as a sacrifice, was offered both to God and by God; to Him as the executive power, and by Him as a person, that His royal mercy may abound."[2]

(3.) Still further, it is contended that the doctrine of pardon as taught by the sacred Scriptures is inconsistent with the doctrine of a ransom as the ground of redemption. Both cannot be true, it is said. If there be a ransom given and accepted, there cannot be pardon; and if there be pardon for sin, there cannot be such a ransom as the one which we have stated Christ gave when He died for men. Too much countenance has been given in popular sermons, and even in theological treatises, to ideas which warrant such an objection. Stockell, for example, says, "In a strict and proper sense, the Infinite God doth not forgive sin, and that with propriety of speech, it cannot be said, that God pardoneth our sins and

[1] Job xxxiii. 24. [2] *The Christian Atonement*, p. 175.

transgressions."[1] In "The Sum of Saving Knowledge,"[2] God is represented as making a "bargain" with the Son by means of which He was to "purchase" salvation for the elect. And it is not unfrequently stated that our Lord paid the debt which the sinner owed to God when He gave Himself a ransom. But all such commercial conceptions of the atoning work of Calvary are foreign to the representations of the Bible. Sin is not a debt, but a crime and disobedience—a crime against the law of the Divine government, and disobedience to the will of the heavenly Father. Because it is both, it can be at once atoned for, and forgiven; not indeed, by God in the one relation, but in the twofold relations which He sustains to all moral creatures. "It is of the utmost importance to make the necessary and scriptural discrimination between the paternal and the rectoral character of God. Now it is in His fatherly, and not His judicial character, that He pardons. A judge (who is always in human governments merely the representative of the supreme governor) cannot pardon. In his private character (that is, as a man and neighbour) he may pardon a per-

[1] *The Redeemer's Glory Unveiled*, p. 157.
[2] *Confession of Faith*, Head ii., Sec. ii.

sonal offence; but in his public character (that is, as a judge) he must be just. He is in this character competent only to give expression to the law. He is the law's mouth, and can say nothing which the law does not say. Law never makes, and cannot, in the nature of things, make provision for pardon. When a criminal receives pardon, it is not from the judge, it is not from the lawgiver as such, it is not from the supreme ruler as such (that is, as the administrator of public justice), but it is from the supreme ruler as *father of the people.* Pardon is essentially extra-judicial, extra-rectoral. Now, it is in God's character as Father, and in that alone that He pardons. Hence when we pray to Him for pardon we pray to Him as 'Our Father.' Hence, also, it is necessary that the selfsame sins which have already been fully atoned for be also pardoned before we can enjoy the smilings of our Father's countenance."[1] The prodigal son as a son required pardon and received it. But the sinner under law, and liable to its curse, requires redemption, and this can only

[1] *The Nature of the Propitiation*, by James Morison, pp. 8, 9. This treatise is out of print, but is of extraordinary value because of its suggestiveness, and its clear distinctions. It would do good to thousands if republished now.

be received on account of a ransom. The ransom was provided by the Supreme Head of the Divine government, and this was essential to the validity of the transaction, and accepted by Him in the way pointed out. On the ground of this so valuable for the ends of law, order, and holiness, the Father may receive the son as a rebel and transgressor, and remember against him his sin no more for ever. The ransom does not do away with the freeness and the graciousness of pardon, and the pardon would have been impossible without the ransom. The latter conditions the former, and the love of God is the source of both.

CHAPTER X.

CHRIST A DIVINE SATISFACTION.

THE Atonement is frequently represented in theological works as a satisfaction rendered to God, or to the justice of God, in virtue of which sinners may be saved. This is a prevailing setting of the doctrine, and one which

has a distinguished place in sermons, tracts, and popular treatises generally, nor can it be objected to if properly understood. It is admitted that the word satisfaction is not—unlike the words sacrifice, propitiation, ransom—applied to Christ or His work in the Bible, and with two exceptions it has not a place in the English version of the Scriptures as synonymous with the word atonement. Nevertheless it has been used, and may legitimately be used, in this relation. It is a theological term, like that of Original Sin, Trinity, and other terms of a doctrinal import, which, though not Biblical, express Biblical and theological ideas and doctrines. On this ground no valid objection can be urged against the words "satisfaction to God," provided the phrase is a symbol of a truth, and not a mere human fiction. That it is a truth will be seen as we proceed to its consideration.

1. Christ may be said to satisfy the love and the holiness of God by His pure life, His active obedience. "Christ satisfied herein," says Archbishop Trench, "not the Divine anger, but the Divine craving and yearning after a perfect holiness, righteousness, and obedience in man, God's chosen creature, the firstfruits

of His creatures; which craving no man had satisfied, but all had disappointed before."[1] This is true so far, and a truth which cannot be lost sight of without the harmony of the faith being broken up. The divine Father was ever satisfied with the pure and spotless earth-life of His own beloved Son. His feelings towards Him at all times were ever those of complacency and fatherly affection. Robertson's statement is to be fully endorsed when he says, "Let no man say that God was angry with His Son."[2] Anger to the person and the character of Christ was impossible. He loved Him in the eternity which is past with all the love of His infinite heart, and this was not changed when Christ assumed our nature in harmony with the will of the Father, that He might bring the sinful and the erring back to God. When Jesus was working out His mission and bearing the sin of the world, a voice came twice from "the most excellent glory," pointing the Lord out from all others as the one who was, in a special sense, the Son of God, in whom the Father was well pleased.[3] With the loving eye of the

[1] *University Sermons*, p. 37.
[2] *Sermons*, Vol. I., p. 146.
[3] Matt. iii. 17; Luke ix. 35.

tenderest and most fatherly of all fathers, God followed His Son through His journey from the manger to the cross. He delighted in His filial love, His son-like deportment, and His constant obedience. Never was this more so than when He passed through the dire conflict in the wilderness, the deep agony of the garden, and the deeper, yea, the deepest agony and isolation on the cross. Mysterious though the dereliction of the Divine countenance and conscious presence was on the cross, we cannot doubt but that God at that moment had towards the person of Christ nothing but feelings of love. He was still His Son, His well-beloved Son, the only true soul which the earth contained. On Him the eye of Divine complacency rested, and because of His perfect fulfilling of the Divine law and desire, He satisfied the love and the holiness of the heavenly Father. All other men had fallen, but the Man Christ Jesus stood erect. Nowhere but in His Son could the Creator-Father see in realised fact His ideal of humanity. He was faithful among the faithless, obedient among the disobedient, pure among the unholy; a perfect man who could defy the powers of darkness to find any evil in Him, but all others were imperfect, stunted, and fragmentary

specimens of what men ought to have been. Being all this, God was well pleased with Christ. His yearning and desire for holiness and love in man was satisfied, and in Him He rested with supreme joy. "Behold," He said, "my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect *in whom* my soul delighteth. I have put my Spirit upon him."[1] He was, and is, and ever shall be, the beloved of the Father, and the beloved as the Redeemer of men in whom they may be accepted.

2. This is true, as we have said, important truth, but it is not all the truth. God's love of holiness was satisfied with Christ; but His righteousness and justice were also satisfied with what Christ did and suffered because of sin and for sinners. He was satisfied with the character of Christ, but He was satisfied with His work as well. These two aspects of the subject are closely associated; but they are capable of being distinguished, and must be, before the full doctrine of the Atonement is set forth. Not that there is any antagonism between the love, the righteousness, and the justice of God. This is out of the question, for God is one, and His love, righteousness, and justice are one. They are not indeed the

[1] Is. xlii. 1.

same, but they are one in God, inasmuch as it is the one person who is loving, righteous, and just. Love in God is the more fundamental of the three, and is a general emotion of the Divine heart; righteousness is the moral element of the Divine character, as determined by the perfect rule of right in the Supreme reason; and justice is righteousness in relation to subjects of government. "Justice, in fact, is a quality having necessary reference to the deserts or merits and the demerits, that is, the goodness or the badness, of its objects. Take away moral states, and you obliterate the possibility of the exercise of justice."[1] From this it follows that the manifestations of love will always be regulated by the righteousness and justice of God. And where the moral states of creatures are bad and deserve punishment, love cannot be displayed, except justice be satisfied and the demands of righteousness attended to. It frequently happens in human life that the outflow of benevolence is checked by righteousness and justice. A father having a large family depending on him, and a small income, just sufficient to provide honestly for their wants, may have

[1] *The "A priori" Argument for the Existence of God*, by W. H. Gillespie, 6th ed., p. 62.

promptings of heart to give what he possesses to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. Righteousness says, "This you are not required to do by the law of right;" and Justice says, "This you cannot do without injury to those depending upon you, therefore it must not be done." Or, a ruler may have a large, and, as the world would say, a soft heart. A person is brought before him who is guilty of a crime for which the law awards a heavy punishment. The benevolence of his nature may be stirred and prompt him to let the prisoner off; but Righteousness would say, "No, this cannot be done; evil is done, and punishment is due." And Justice says, "There are interests of government and of the community involved of unspeakable moment, and these interests must be attended to in this case." Now, let these principles, which are received as sound by all classes of men when applied to the affairs of earth, be applied to God, man, Christ, and Divine government. God's love has always terminated on man, though fallen and guilty. If it had been righteously possible, and just to the Divine character and the interests of all concerned, it would have been manifested to the race unconditionally, for God never had a personal feeling of revenge to man. But this

it could not be in righteousness and justice. For by such action the distinctions between good and evil, obedience and disobedience, would have been for ever confounded, the authority of the law would have been destroyed, and the salvation of the law-breakers themselves could not have been secured. Justice demanded a condition which would satisfy its claims, and righteousness demanded what would secure the promotion of holiness in the hearts of those who required deliverance, and of those who stood fast in their integrity. These ends must be met, or love could not flow out in mercy, and salvation could not be experienced. And these ends were fully wrought out by Christ when He bore sin, died for sinners, was set publicly forth as propitiatory, and gave himself as a ransom for all. He met the claims of righteousness and justice to the full. With what He did in this relation, as well as in others, God was satisfied. By the Cross, the unity and harmony of the Divine character is exhibited for the reverence and adoration of all the morally exalted and perfect in heaven. At His cross mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

3. The satisfaction of the justice of God is

not to be confounded with satisfaction in the mere sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. It has been often said that the doctrine of the Atonement, as a satisfaction to Divine justice, was opposed to all we know of God; that it represents Him as one who takes delight in suffering, as animated with the feelings of revenge, and as determined to have the suffering, no matter from whom, before He would extend His pardon. These are not only misrepresentations of the true doctrine, but painful and gross misrepresentations which never should have been made. They are worse than caricatures, for caricatures have some resemblance to the original, but these statements have none. They are as opposed to the truth as light is to darkness, or right to wrong. He who delights in suffering for its own sake is a moral monster; and he who, out of feelings of revenge or for personal aggrandisement, demands "his pound of flesh" is a Shylock, which the human heart, even in its depravity, turns away from in disgust. But the righteous Lord is infinitely removed from all such imperfections and feelings when He receives satisfaction to His justice. He displays love even in this, and love on the grandest scale. It is because He loves all, that He required to give

His Son up to the death to make known His estimate of sin before His forgiveness could be vouchsafed to the guilty. The sufferings of Christ were well-pleasing for what they expressed of His mind, and enabled Him to do. They declared that He was just, and the justifier of all those who believed, and made known, in a way and manner that nothing else could, at once His love for souls, for law, for holiness, and just government. "It is truly said that the Father of fallen men needed no sacrifice from His Son in order to dispose Him to forgive their trespasses. But this may be true, and yet God find it necessary for governmental purposes to publish His forgiving dispositions, and dispense positive pardon only in circumstances perfectly adapted to convince the erring and the penitent, and even the unrepentant, that mercy is not exercised at the expense of righteousness."[1] Christ's work was for all worlds, and all moral beings. The Cross is the pivot of the moral universe. To the Lamb of God, as He hangs on the accursed tree, many eyes turn. Man is to look there and be healed, as the Israelites were healed when they looked to the brazen serpent on the pole in the desert. Lost spirits look and tremble, for there they

[1] *Deep Things of God*, by Dr. William Bathgate, p. 100.

behold the determination of God to let the universe see the evil of iniquity, and His determination to uphold the authority of His holy law.† Angels bend down from their lofty seats that they may gaze at this wonderful sight, and they see in it the love and the holiness of God displayed. And God looks with undimmed eye on Christ as He bears sin in His own body, and dies because of it. While He does so, He has no pleasure in the sufferings as such, the agony for itself, and the death as dissolution; but He has pleasure in what they make known. He is satisfied with them, because through the sore anguish, the broken body, and the shed blood, there streams the light of His love, His holiness, and His justice to the confines of His empire, which, when seen, awakens the adoration of the Cherubim, Seraphim, and heavenly host, who express their emotion in the words, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth;" "justice and judgment are the foundations of Thy throne, and mercy and truth go before Thy face."[1]

[1] Rev. xix. 6; Ps. lxxxix. 14.

† But how?—does the universe see it?—& h
if they are not spiritually minded, can they?

CHAPTER XI.

CHRIST, BENEFACTOR AND REPRESENTATIVE.

THERE is a common ground on which all Christians meet with regard to the sufferings of Christ, and which should be taken advantage of as much as possible in the consideration of their nature and influence. It is allowed that He was a sufferer, and that He did not deserve to suffer. He was a man of sorrows who bore a heavy burden, endured agony which ploughed the deepest part of His nature, and wrung from Him the heavy sigh and the bitter tear. Nay, more, that it was the burden of His soul which broke His heart, and led Him to give up the Ghost. This He did not deserve, neither did He require it for personal discipline or to sanctify His Spirit; for He was holy, harmless, and undefiled. The Son of God stood in need of no correction, no chastisement, and of no sorrow, to woo Him from the temporal things of earth and to fix His affections on things above. Why then did He suffer? This is the problem which requires attention, and which cannot be solved except there be more or less

implied in the solution, the vicarious nature of the sufferings. If it was not for Himself, for His benefit, or because He deserved to experience what He endured, it must have been on behalf of man. "By all who receive the Scriptures as substantially authoritative, it is acknowledged, accordingly, that in some way it was for the benefit of others, not for His personal advantage, that sorrow, distress, anguish, and even death were laid upon Him."[1] This being acknowledged by all those who are within the Christian sphere of thought, it is of importance we should define as clearly as possible the relation sustained by Christ when He suffered and died for man.

1. In the first place, and generally, our Lord suffered and died for the benefit of the human race. This is the common ground which He occupies with all those noble men and women who have lived lives of self-sacrifice and self-abnegation. They have lived not for themselves, but for others; and in promoting the good of others they have passed through tribulation and sorrow. Many of the Old Testament worthies and the New Testament saints, might be named in this connection. They spent their time and energies in endea-

[1] *The Christian Atonement*, by Rev. Joseph Gilbert, p. 63.

vouring to spread the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, and in elevating their fellowmen to a higher platform of existence than that which they previously occupied. Paul is worthy of special mention as a benefactor of man, and as one who, through distress and sadness, sowed the seeds of the kingdom in human hearts, and watered them with his tears. Martyrs, confessors, philanthropists, patriots, and, in a word, all who have lived to any purpose, and had an influence for good on society, have toiled and suffered while living. A lady said to a friend that she would not go to heaven by the sufferings of another, and that she could not think of being benefited by another's sorrow; such a thought would make her miserable, and the blessing so produced would lose its value in her estimation. To which it was replied: "You should therefore commit suicide, for if it had not been for the pains and manifold sufferings of her whom you call mother, you never would have had an existence. Your life is the result of the sufferings of another." It is almost a law that no good can be done without self-sacrifice, and that all self-sacrifice involves pain and loss. The operation of this law has its highest and most perfect illustration

in the personal experience of the Saviour. He suffered for the benefit of man. He died that blessings might be his. Because of what He has done and suffered, light and life, spiritual elevation and moral development, have become possible to His brethren according to the flesh. And the whole race, with its millionfold members, may through Him become recipients of life which will thrill their souls with strength and impart joy unspeakable. Blessings in body, blessings in social, political, and individual relations, for time and eternity, have come to the world through the sufferings and death of God's own Son. He is the fountain from whence have flowed, for upwards of eighteen centuries, streams of life and love, inspiration and strength, which have made glad all those who have tasted of their waters. Whatever else may be denied, it cannot be denied that He is the greatest Reformer, Benefactor, and Human Brother who has tabernacled in this world.

2. As Christ benefited man by His sufferings and death, so these are traceable to the sin of man. The passages which emphasise this doctrine are numerous, and the thoughts they contain enter into the woof and the warp of the verbal revelation. Of old it was made

known that He was to be "wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him."[1] "He died for our sins,"[2] says Paul. Peter enunciates the same fact when he declares, "Christ also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust."[3] These Scriptures assert that sins were the cause of the death and sufferings of Christ, and these not His own, for He had none, but the sins of others, of man, all men. This differentiates our Lord from all the other benefactors of their kind, and proves that, in the estimation of those who make known the mind of the Spirit of God, He was alone in this respect. True, we read of the way the prophets and other servants of God were persecuted, imprisoned, put to death in every conceivable manner; but though their persecutors sinned grievously when they murdered these men of God, these men are nowhere said to have died for their sins. Old Socrates was put to death for teaching the youth of Athens new thoughts of God, their nature, duty, and immortality. The whole of the city of his abode was implicated in his death, for it was commanded by the legal authorities in the name of the whole people. But when he drank the

[1] Isa. liii. 5. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 3. [3] 1 Pet. iii. 18.

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hemlock his pupil, the "Divine Plato," did not write concerning his old master that he suffered for the sins of the Athenians, or that he was imprisoned for their transgressions, and was poisoned for their iniquities. It is the same with the Apostle of the Gentiles. During all his Christian career he was hunted by the Jews, persecuted by others, and ultimately put to death by Nero; but it is not mentioned in the New Testament, or in any other history, that Paul bore the sins of men, or was delivered for their offences. Nor are such things predicated of any other person but the Saviour. The sins of men were the cause of His anguish and death, which they could not be said to be of any other. Alas, many have been wickedly put to death since the proto-martyr, Abel, fell under the murderous blow of his brother's arm. In all countries and climes there have been good men and true, who, because they were living condemnations of those in power, or those who were ruled, have had their days made miserable, and their lives cut short, by the wicked deeds of their contemporaries. Of none of them, however, even of the noblest, the wisest, and the best, has it ever been said that they died for our sins, or were wounded for our transgressions. But of Jesus Christ this is,

affirmed in various forms, and frequently, which proves, if words have any meaning at all, that the sins of men were the reason or procuring cause of His sufferings, and but for them He would have had no agony, and would not have tasted death.

3. The relation which existed between the sin of the world and Christ's suffering and death will be more clearly understood when His representative character is considered. Christ was the representative of man, "the second Adam," who undertook to treat with men for God, and with God for men. In this capacity He acted for the whole human race, to whom He stood related as their Creator, and by the incarnation, as their brother. The constitution of His individuality being the God-man in one person, fitted Him to be a true and perfect representative, one who knew the Father perfectly and all men, and needed not that any one should testify of man, for He knew what was in him. This relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ is pointed out in various parts of the Bible. It will suffice, meantime, to refer to those which speak of Christ as a priest and as the second Adam. In both these Scriptures the idea of representative is the prominent one, on which other ideas hang.

Aaron when he acted in his official capacity did so for the whole Jewish nation; for he was "ordained *for men* in things pertaining to God." And Adam when he was in Eden was the representative of all those who would descend from him by natural generation. As he acted they were affected; and results of what he did, did not exhaust themselves on him, but they passed on to all the members of his family. When he sinned "all men sinned in him,"[1] is the sententious deliverance of the Apostle Paul. In this, Adam was a type of Him who was to come, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. Like the original father of the human race, Jesus was a representative of those whose nature He wore, and His actions, sufferings, and death were done and endured in this capacity. As a high priest He carried out the work as one on whom rested the burden of every member of the human family, and who, in His sacerdotal duties, acted not as a private person, but as their public and recognised representative. The ambassador sent by a sovereign to a foreign court is there to stand in the place of the sender, and what he does the king does, and what he says is what the king would have said if he had been

[1] Rom. v. 12. The words are ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον.

present. The representative of a commercial firm embodies, for the time being, the whole firm, and his deeds are looked upon as if done by the whole members. The very essence of the principle of representation, is that the one speaks, acts, and decides for the many; and what he does is laid to their account by those to whom the representative is accredited. Let this analogy be applied to the Saviour, who came in "the likeness of sinful flesh, that He might condemn sin in the flesh." Of a solemn truth He became a member, if we may use the illustration, of the poor and bankrupt firm of humanity, and by doing so took on Him all its liabilities and responsibilities. As their representative He treated with God for their sins, and in order to their deliverance and salvation. For their sakes He became poor, that they might become rich; and for their sins He groaned and bled, that they might not be condemned, but have everlasting life. So closely was He related to the guilty and fallen, that when "He died for all, all died;"[1] and that each one as he looks to the cross by faith can say, "'I am crucified with Christ.'[2] What "my representative did and endured was for "me. And what He is doing now that He is

[1] 2 Cor. v. 14. [2] Gal. ii. 20.

"within the veil, in the holy of holies above, is "also for me. Oh, then, Lord, behold my Shield, "my Advocate, and treat me as He deserves."

CHAPTER XII.

THE VICARIOUS NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT.

THERE are few doctrines which have lost their hold on the minds of certain classes of Christians within this century, more than that of the substitutionary or vicarious nature of the Atonement of Christ. This is doubted, or denied, by those who by no means are allied to the theological position of the late Dr. Channing or Dr. James Martineau as to the Divinity of the Saviour, and affiliated doctrines. Maurice, Robertson, Young, Bushnell, and others have expressly set themselves to oppose the doctrine, and some of them do so in no measured terms. Dr. Young declares, "There is not a single text in Scripture in which this doctrine, or anything approaching to it, is directly expressed, or in which even it is natural,

far less necessary, to presuppose it."[1] Bushnell says that substitution "offends every strongest sentiment of our nature;" and adds, "If Christ should himself consent to such punishment, He would only ask to have all the most immovable convictions, both of God's moral nature and our own, confounded or eternally put by."[2] He therefore discards the generally received doctrine of vicarious sacrifice, and substitutes the following as his own:—"We come," he says, "to the true conception, which is that Christ, in what is called His vicarious sacrifice, simply engages, at the expense of great suffering, and even of death itself, to bring us out of our sins themselves, and so out of our penalties."[3]

Is this all that the Bible teaches on this subject? Must the doctrine of the substitutionary aspect of the work of Christ be given up, and the views of the Broad Church party, or of the Unitarians, be adopted in its stead? To the law and the testimony let us appeal, and what they affirm let us receive with all sincerity.

In opening the Bible to see what it says on

[1] *Life and Light of Men*, p. 301.
[2] *Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 6.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

the vicariousness of the Atonement, it is not difficult to find passages which bear on the subject; but the difficulty lies in selecting those which space will allow us to consider, out of the many which are found in the sacred page. A few are all that can meantime be noticed.

1. The first class to which attention is directed is those in which the Greek preposition ὑπὲρ is used with the genitive, and has the significance of "instead of"—substitution. Paul says, "We pray you (ὑπὲρ χριστοῦ) in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God"[1]—that is, as substitutes for Christ. Here there ought to be no doubt as to the force of the preposition. Neither should there be, when the same inspired writer in the same chapter says, "For He hath made Him to be sin for (ὑπὲρ) us who knew no sin." "We thus judge that if one died for all (ὑπὲρ πάντων), then were all dead." Elsewhere the words occur, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for (ὑπὲρ) us."[2] "That He by the grace of God should taste death for (ὑπὲρ) every man." "For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for (ὑπὲρ) the unjust, that He might bring us to God."[3] In all

[1] 2 Cor. v. 20, 21, 14. [2] Gal. iii. 13. [3] 1 Peter iii. 18.

these passages, if the phrase "in the room of" or "instead of" was inserted, it would accurately represent the original; for though the preposition, according to Winer, signifies merely "for," it implies, in the cases quoted, the substitutionary idea, and that too most decidedly. As those who besought men for Christ were doing so in His room and stead, so when Christ suffered the just for the unjust, it could be in no other way than just in their place.

2. The second class of passages which bears on this point fortifies this conclusion. It consists of those passages in which the Greek preposition *ἀντὶ* is employed, which literally and properly means, according to the authority just quoted, "before, in front of, over against," and, "figuratively, barter, exchange, in which one thing is given *for or equivalent of* another, (as, tooth *for* tooth, Matt. v. 38)."[1] The word was used by Jesus when He said, "The Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give His life a ransom for many" (*λυτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν*).[2] And by Paul when, with singular force of diction, he employs both prepositions in setting forth the one Mediator as He "who gave Himself a

[1] *Grammar of New Testament Diction*, p. 381.
[2] Matt. xx. 28.

ransom (ἀντίλυτρον) for (ὑπὲρ) all."[1] On the latter verse Dr. Reynolds remarks, "The idea of λύτρον is a redemption price of a slave or a captive; while ἀντὶ in composition, and in ordinary regimen, has the further idea of substitution, ὑπέρ represents the object or direction of the act. It can be but an illustration of Christ's most wonderful work as mediator, yet the peculiarity illustrated must be full of significance."[2] Doubtless this is the case. The fact with which the writers have to deal is unlike, in certain aspects, any other fact which ever transpired; and this renders it all but impossible to explain it in all its length and breadth, its height and depth, in the symbols of human speech. But, at the same time, from the deliverances of the holy men of old, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, quoted, we can arrive at no other conclusion than that they understood the sufferings and death of Christ as vicarious; and that it was their desire that their readers should believe that they were endured in their room and stead. "If this were *not* the Holy Ghost's meaning," Dr. A. Hodge says, "we may well despair of arriving at the understanding of His

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 6.

[2] *The Expositor*, Vol. II., p. 224.

meaning on any subject through the study of His words in any department of Scripture."[1]

3. Objections have been directed against this doctrine which must be glanced at. They come from all sides, and are persistently urged, and that, too, out of all good faith and earnestness. Baring Gould, from his standpoint, writes thus, "Such being the law, the penalty fell on Christ instead of us; but surely this is not law, but the violation of law, through the organisation of society. What sort of justice would that be which, because A. had stolen a sheep, hanged Z.? It would be the acme of injustice."[2] "What notions of veracity have we here?" asks Dr. James Martineau. "When a sentence is proclaimed against crime, is it indifferent to judicial truth *upon* whom it falls? Personally addressed to the guilty, may it descend, without a lie, upon the guiltless? Provided there is suffering, is it no matter *where*?"[3] We quote no more, for the gist of the objection is expressed by those two writers. In answer, we have to say that what they object to is not the truth as made known in the Scriptures, nor the doctrine as defined by

[1] *The Atonement*, p. 155.
[2] *Development of Religious Belief*, Vol. II., p. 311.
[3] *The Scheme of Vicarious Redemption*, p. 12.

most Christian theologians, but a twisted conception of their own as to the evangelical doctrine. There are other writers who agree with them on this point, and think that when it is asserted that Christ represented man as the High Priest, and offered up Himself as a sacrifice in the room and stead of sinners, that it is maintained that this was done through law, and that He was the recipient of the exact penalty threatened against the transgressors. Arguing against this they can easily show that it involves a tortuous policy on the part of God, and an unjust course of procedure in causing the punishment which should have fallen on A. to come with all its weight on Z. But the Atonement of the Lord as laid down in the sacred word, and expounded in the preceding chapters, is open to no such charges. It was devised by, and originated in the mind of, the heavenly Father. It is provided by, not the offender, but the offended; not by the sinner, but by God as the Supreme One and Father of man. The law *qua* law neither sanctioned nor allowed of an atonement. It has ever had, as law, one deliverance, "Do this and ye shall live, disobey and ye shall die." Acting within, if we may use the expression in regard to God, the legal lines He had laid down in His moral

administration, and through legal methods, salvation, redemption, and sanctification would have for ever been an impossibility. All action in this sphere would have rewarded the holy and condemned the unholy. "If there had been a law given," says the apostle, "which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by that law."[1] Such a law was not given. The Atonement therefore is superlegal. It comes from the sphere above law. As some writers have said, it is an "unique transcendental fact," and though in full harmony with all the ends and objects law has in view, and wrought out by one who came under its authority and realised its curse, it is superlegal. It operates on a plane higher than that of mere moral government, and has modified some of its functions. Hence it follows, that though Christ was substituted as a sacrifice for man, He did not bear the exact penalty of the law which men deserved to bear, and would have borne, had there been no way of escape. This, in the nature of things was impossible, both as to the ingredients and duration of the punishment. Indeed, strictly speaking, Christ was not punished at all, though He suffered with an agony beyond

[1] Gal. iii. 21.

what any mere man could bear. Punishment cannot be inflicted where crime and sin have not been committed. This is true in the outer punishments of human government, and far more so with regard to the inner moral and spiritual punishments which belong to the Divine government. There, for example, is a person who is taken up and tried for theft, but who is wholly innocent of the charge. Witnesses testify to his hurt, and he is condemned to imprisonment for six months. He passes from the bar to the cell, changes his garments for the raiment of felons, has to herd with the lowest by day, and lie alone during the night, separate from those who love him; such a one suffers intensely, but he is not punished, and could not be. In like manner, for high and holy ends Jesus Christ came to suffer and to die. His heart was to be filled with sorrow, and His consciousness was to be overwhelmed by the sin of the world. He was to be despised, rejected, ill-treated; and at last He was to be alone with sin, without the conscious presence of God. But this was not punishment, though in popular language it is often called such. It was suffering, pregnant with meaning and surcharged with love. And instead of turning away from this sight as ex-

pressing what is dishonouring to the heavenly Father and the Holy Sovereign, we draw nearer, and still more near; for it makes known the purity, the tenderness, and the mercy of God, with a fulness to be seen nowhere else.

4. If, then, the sufferings and death of the Lord were not the penalty of the law, and inflicted in the legal sphere by the supreme moral Governor, what position do they occupy? Our answer is, *they were substituted in the place of the punishment, and were accepted by God as such.* Dionysius, the tyrant, was willing to accept the substitution of Damon for Pythias, both as to person and punishment; but it is not the same in the matter of the Atonement. The person of the second Adam, the High Priest of humanity, represents the race of which He became a member; and His sufferings and death in human nature were accepted as substitutionary, in the room and stead of the infliction of the law-penalty. In the courts of this kingdom a fine is frequently substituted instead of imprisonment, though they have little in common. This substitution is allowed in human jurisprudence, because it is thought that the money payment answers all the ends of justice as efficiently as the imprisonment of the guilty person would. And so with the

administration of Divine law and justice and the work of Christ. God desired to save man from sin and its consequences. To fulfil this desire, means required to be adopted whereby the ends of punishment might be wrought out, and God's own relation to sin, as its eternal foe, manifested. With the eye of His infinite and perfect intelligence, He saw that this could be done best, if not only, by the gift of His own Son, and His being delivered unto the death for us all. That Son He loved with an infinite and eternal love, and yet He was willing to spare Him not. With a will in perfect harmony with the Father's will the Son was ready to do the work required, and to endure the sorrow and death necessary. He came, He lived, He obeyed, suffered, had His body broken, His blood shed, and this by sin and for sinners. Thus Christ and His work were substituted in the place of man and his punishment, and subserves the purposes of the law and its penalty far more effectually than they would have been wrought out if all the human race had perished in their sins. If a human father receives credit when he says to his son, who wishes to descend into a dark pit of death that he might rescue his brother who lies at its bottom wounded and near dead, which, by hypothesis,

the father could not, in the nature of things, accomplish, "Go, my son, and what you suffer in the work will show my love to him who is ready to die." Surely, surely, the good and blessed God should not be spoken of otherwise than with words of praise and thanksgiving when He said, "Go, my Son, my only Son, "remove all barriers and difficulties out of the "way of my love reaching the sinners of the "earth. Go to the manger, the wilderness, the "garden, the cross, and by Thy sufferings and "death express my hatred of sin, my love of "order, and my determination to put down this "terrible evil throughout my wide domains, "and prepare the way for the granting of pardon, "peace, and the Holy Ghost." To say that the doctrine of the vicarious nature of the Atonement represents God as determining to have suffering before He would pardon, no matter from whom, is a misrepresentation which it is difficult to understand and not more easy to excuse.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ATONEMENT AND PARDON.

When the shadow of the Cross fell upon the soul of the Saviour, He manifested a deeper interest in, and a warmer attachment to, those whom He had chosen as His Apostles. He isolated them from others and from those environments which tended to distract their attention, that He might speak to them of the mystery of His sufferings and death. This was done gradually, as they were able to bear the intelligence, till the truth was as fully made known as they were capable of understanding it. During this season His words were, if possible, more solemn and full of meaning, His prayers were more earnest and comprehensive, and His acts more significant. With a strong desire He desired to eat the Passover with the twelve. At that sacred table, so suggestive, He sat with those He had chosen out of the world in holiest fellowship,

which even the presence of the betrayer could not disturb. "And as they were eating," Matthew tells us, "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink ye all of it; for this is shed for the remission of sins.'"[1] This act, at that moment, must have been all but a shut mystery to the imperfectly instructed minds of the Apostles. They might well marvel in silence, and, like Mary, keep these things and ponder them in their hearts. A mere revealer of truth would never have thus acted; he would have said, "Remember not my death, but my words." A mere martyr would not have instituted such a memorial of his death, and he dared not have said that his shed blood could bless the world. One who only revealed the Father's love for man would not have desired to fix the attention of his followers so pre-eminently on a broken body and shed blood. He would have pointed to his life, his words, and his acts of benevolence and tenderness. The mystery of this scene would deepen in every age, if Christ and His death were not more than a teacher and his lesson, a martyr

[1] Matt. xxvi. 26-28.

and his faithfulness unto death, a revealer and his truth; and it is this position, which is additional to all these, which explains the symbols and the realities symbolised, and the connection of the latter with the life of the world and the remission of sins. Christ's blood was shed for the forgiveness of iniquities is the lesson taught by Him who instituted the Lord's supper.

1. This is the uniform teaching of Scripture, as the following passages will abundantly prove. "Him hath God exalted with His right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins." "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."[1] "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." "Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."[2] If along with these passages are taken those which speak of justification, deliverance, and redemption, it will be seen that the inspired writers utter no uncertain sound on the relation which exists between the pardon of sin and the blood or sufferings of the Redeemer. Christ has "been set forth as propitiatory, through faith in His blood, . . . for the remission of sins that are past." "Being jus-

[1] Acts v. 31; xiii. 38. [2] Eph. i. 7; iv. 32.

tified by His blood." [1] "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." [2] So that what was written of the old economy is also true of the new, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." [3] Pardon, forgiveness, remission to man, come from God on account of, through, and on the ground of what Christ has done when He tasted death for every man. This is the central truth of the Gospel, and constitutes it the glad-tidings of great joy which the heralds of the Cross are commissioned to preach to every creature.

2. But the question has been asked, Is pardon, as the remission of penalty, a possibility? If I sin against the moral law, it is said, I must receive the penalty of the act, as really as if I put my hand in the fire, which will without remedy be destroyed. The laws of God in the moral region, it is asserted, are like the laws of God in the physical sphere, inexorable, and admit of no pardon. He that sins must suffer, and the sufferings will be endured to the uttermost extent in the case of all. This is the position taken by Dr. John Young, who says, "Without aid from any quarter, they (the laws) avenge themselves, and exact, and continue without fail to exact,

[1] Rom. iii. 24, 25. [2] Gal. iii. 13. [3] Heb. ix. 22.

so long as the evil remains, the amount of penalty—visible and invisible—to the veriest jot and tittle, which the deed of violation deserves. Essentially and perfectly wise and right, they are irresistible, in the case of the obedient and the rebellious alike."[1] Again, "The punishment of moral evil always and everywhere is certain. The justice of the universe, in this sense, is an eternal fact, which even God could not set aside."[2] This is a stern doctrine, and one by the contemplation of which we are made to shudder. For if it were true, and if the wages of sin is death, there could be no hope for the human race, and no joy as a present experience. But true it is not. As we write the sun is setting in the west, and the evening is calm. The glow of the departing orb covers the scene with a mystic glory. Within our vision trees are putting forth their leaves, dogs romping at their play, and sheep grazing quietly in the meadow. Besides these objects there are others more interesting still. There is a group of boys full of health, and if the ring of their laughter or their noise be indications of the state of their hearts, they are also full of joy. And the men, who are they? and what are they doing? They are those who have

[1] *Light and Life of Men*, p. 87. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

been at business all day, doing their best to earn their bread in the sweat of their brows or brains, and now they seek a little recreation in a field game. Yesterday, for this is Monday, they were at the house of God confessing their sins and their numerous transgressions; and, even now, if asked solemnly and earnestly, they would confess that they had sinned against the eternal law of righteousness, and had done what they ought not to have done. Does all this teach that the punishment of sin is exacted here and now from the sinner, "to the veriest jot or tittle"? Verily, no. Does it teach that moral law and its penalties are of the same nature as violations of the laws of nature and their consequences? Again the answer must be, Verily, no. But this scene does proclaim, with power far beyond logic or philosophy, that sin does not bring its penalty after it immediately, and to the full, as the violation of physical law does. And if penalty be held back by a gracious hand for a season, may it not be held back for ever? in short, may it not be wholly remitted? He who would say no to this query would not deny doctrines or hypotheses only, but facts also. The present state of the world is a standing argument against Dr. Young's theory, that pardon in

the sense of the remission of sins is impossible.

3. Besides, if our father according to the flesh can pardon, why not God? There is nothing more common than for those who violate the laws of the home or social propriety, to be forgiven. This forgiveness does not, in some cases, consist of simply the removal of external punishment, but also of what is more difficult to bear, internal punishment. We have known a child sin against the will of a good and a pious father, and who thereby incurred his righteous indignation, his moral disapprobation. For the time being the child was deprived of a certain amount of his liberty, and was restrained in the amount and means of his enjoyment. The punishment in this case was both external and internal; and the most important element was that which had its seat in the soul. The loss of the external benefits was as nothing compared with the burning thought that the father knew the sin of his boy, and righteously condemned it. This was the pain, the penalty, and the fire which consumed his whole being. Till this was removed life could not be enjoyed; and this could be removed only by pardon, which would prepare the way for reconciliation. Pardon,

in such a case, is possible. Alas! for thousands, if it were not so. And if we, being evil, know how to pardon our children, how much more shall our Father who is in heaven? He can remove His wrath, His holy indignation against sin. He can remit the penalty, and stay its power. This may be a moral miracle, but it is a fact in human experience, and one which has blessed the fearful and the guilty, and imparted to them newness of life.

4. Remission of sins, then, is a possibility; but is it of value when it is received? To this question we have an answer by Dr. Bushnell which demands attention. He says, "The word, both in Greek and English, is a popular word, which signifies, in common speech, *a letting go;* that is, a letting go of blame, a consenting to raise no impeachment further, and to have all wounded feelings dismissed. . . . It is only a kind of formality, or verbal discharge, that carries practically no discharge at all. It says, 'Go,' but leaves the prison doors shut."[1] If this be all, it would not matter much whether the sinner received it or not, for it would neither alter his state, nor, in the slightest degree, affect his character. Nay, more, it would be a mockery and a snare.

[1] *Vicarious Sacrifice*, pp. 359, 360.

We go into the cell of a man condemned to die. The day of his execution is near at hand, and already the ring of the hammer can be heard which is used to erect his scaffold. To the poor wretch of humankind so situated, we say, by way of "formality," "You are pardoned, but there is to be no discharge," and "go," but "the prison doors are shut." Would this not be the essence of cruelty and tantalisation? Not only would there be no blessing in such a vain "formality," but there would be both insult and injury. Yet this is what this otherwise able writer writes about remission of sins by God. How different it was with David and Paul, both of whom extol the blessedness of the man "whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered."[1] They knew that this remission was no mere "formality," or a "leaving prison doors shut," but a real doing away with exposedness to the outstanding penalties of the Divine law, a passing from death, and a blotting out of transgressions. A correct conception of sin and its punishment on the part of the American divine quoted, would have led him to speak of pardon, which God grants, in a manner very different from what he does. In the ancient

[1] Ps. xxxii. 1, 2; Rom. iv. 7.

economy, and in the new, pardon was ever spoken of as of unspeakable value, and as the first blessing which the sinner required to receive before he could have the feelings and the standing of a child.

5. Again, it has been urged that there was no need for an atonement as the ground of pardon, for repentance on the part of the sinner would suffice for all moral and legal purposes. This is urged by many who are not prepared altogether to deny the propitiation of Christ in its legal aspect, and the objection is so stated that it appeals to the common feeling of fatherhood as its vindication. It is said, if an earthly father can forgive without an atonement, which implies suffering, and on the ground of repentance, the most serious sin of his child, why may not God? If a friend can forgive a friend without making any one experience sorrow, with the exception of the offender, why may not the kind and loving Friend, who is a friend indeed, forgive His weak and erring creature when that creature confesses his sin, and repents of the evil he has done? The objection is plausible, but no more. If it is thought out and understood in its various terms, it will be discovered that the *principle of an atonement* is implied; and when the

difference between man and man, father and child, and God and man, is taken into account, not only implied, but its necessity proved.[1] *First,* Those who urge this objection admit that there must be a condition of pardon somewhere. It is not to be granted without at least repentance and confession, and these are necessary in order to make it fit and becoming in the person injured to bestow forgiveness, as well as in regard to the offender in receiving it. *Secondly,* This repentance is not possible on the part of any one without a revelation of the mind of the offended, by which is made known his estimate of the offence committed. Take the case of a father and child. How is that child ever to be brought into a state of repentance, which is a change of his whole mind as to his evil conduct, apart from the father expressing his righteous feeling regarding it, either in words or acts, or both? If he did not so reveal his

[1] Space forbids me going into this aspect of the subject as fully as would be desirable, otherwise I think it could be demonstrated, that in all cases of pardon which are allowed by the conscience of the individual or nation to be wise and right, the principle of the atonement is acknowledged, and that, in fact, an atonement has been made. This is not a generally received notion by those who hold to the doctrine of Christ's atonement, but it is sound for all that.

mind, the child would never be able to understand either the true nature or turpitude of his transgression, and anything approaching adequate or genuine repentance would be impossible. There never could be awakened in him those moral feelings of conscious wrong-doing, which must enter into any experience worthy of the name of repentance. And, *thirdly*, Such a revelation of the estimate of the evil conduct of the child, on the part of the father, as would be necessary to evoke true sentiments and genuine repentance, must imply suffering to a greater or lesser extent on the part of the parent, and be known by the child to do so. If the father said to the child, without experiencing suffering of a kind proportionate to the sinfulness of the deed, that he was displeased at the action, but it did not matter much, and that he did not feel about it, the child would all but laugh in his face. He would neither have a just conception of his sin, sorrow for it, nor would he repent concerning it. On the other hand, if the father showed by his words and actions, which cost him much poignant grief, that he had a righteous abhorrence of the disobedience of his child, and that it could never meet his approval, though it might be covered by forgiveness,

then, and then only, repentance would take possession of the mind of the culprit, and reconciliation would ensue. This being true to human experience, we hold that those who maintain that repentance on the part of the sinner is necessary to pardon, admit the fundamental principles which are embodied in the Atonement of the Saviour; for all those who believe in the doctrine of an atonement, believe, at the same time, in the necessity of repentance. But they also hold that repentance is not the ground of forgiveness, which is alone found in the death of Christ, which is the revelation of the Divine Father's estimate of the sin of the world, and which was made to declare His justice, and among other ends to make repentance possible to sinners.

6. The supposition that repentance on the part of man could constitute the ground of forgiveness is based on a series of errors which are pointed out by Dr. Parker thus:—"In the first place, there may be an error in the supposition that man is so nearly upon an *equality* with God, that he has merely to apologise in order to bring the misunderstanding to a friendly close; in the second place, there may be an error in the supposition that the question of offence lies between two *persons*, the sinner being one

and God the other; in the third place, there may be an error in the supposition that the sinner has only *done* wrong, whereas the fact may be that he really is wrong—the question not being one of occasional offence, but of lost innocence and perverted nature."[1] The second error pointed out by Dr. Parker is the main one bearing on the subject. God is not on an equality with man. The one is the Creator, the other the creature; the one the Father, and the other the child. The one is the Ruler and Judge, and the other is the subject and the panel at the bar. The distinction is great; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so God is greater, higher, holier, and more august than man. As the Father and Ruler of all worlds, He has to do with more intelligent and moral beings than man in showing His mercy and granting His pardons. All the pure spirits in His universe have a claim upon Him for light and guidance regarding sin and its penalty, and an interest in all that He does. When He extends a helping hand to the fallen, He must do so in such a way as to manifest His righteousness and His purity. When He pardons the guilty, and remits the penalty which they deserve, He must be true to Himself and others,

[1] *The Priesthood of Christ*, p. 20.

and do so in a way which will strengthen the principles of obedience, honour the law, and give additional sanction to His penalties. Hence it is for Christ's sake that He forgives, and by Him we are delivered from the curse of the law, and justified from all things by which we could not be justified by the law of Moses, or by our own deeds or repentance.

7. Pardon of sin implies much, and yet it does not include the removal at once of all the consequences of transgression. When sin is committed, there are resulting therefrom physical, psychical, moral, and penal consequences. If the sin be a crime, or public sin, it brings after it social consequences which are most difficult to bear. For some of these consequences there is no forgiveness; in so far Dr. John Young is right. But these do not constitute the strict penalty of the moral law, but are the natural and incidental results of the violation of that law resulting from the social state of man. When therefore pardon is granted, it does not obliterate at once the evil effects of transgression, which the sinner, though repentant and believing, experiences. These may remain with him till he shuffles off the mortal coil, and leaves the society of earth for the beatitudes of heaven.

But the strict penalty of the law is remitted the moment pardon is received. Divine condemnation is past. The wrath of God is removed. The prison doors are not only opened, but the prisoner is liberated. The chains which bound him to death and woe are snapped asunder. Darkness and horror give place to light and freedom. A voice falls on the ear as gentle as that of a mother, and as firm and full of love as that of the noblest father, "Thy sins are forgiven thee; go, and sin no more."

CHAPTER XIV.

WHY THE ATONEMENT IS THE GROUND OF PARDON.

ARCHBISHOP MAGEE, in answer to the question, "In what way can the death of Christ, considered as a sacrifice of expiation, be conceived to operate to the remission of sins?" says, "To this the Christian answer is, 'I know not, nor does it concern me to know, in what manner

the sacrifice of Christ is connected with the forgiveness of sins; it is enough that this is declared by God to be the medium through which my salvation is effected. I pretend not to dive into the councils of the Almighty. I submit to His wisdom.'"[1] This is the answer of faith, and many rest here without doubt or difficulty. Others cannot so act. If the Atonement, as the medium of pardon, is to have the power over their moral nature which it ought to have, they must get at least a glimpse of the *rationale* of the way that it operates to the pardon of the soul. This can be received if the right standpoint is occupied, and care taken to look at the work of Christ, not so much in detail and in its various aspects, but as a whole; or rather, to consider Jesus Christ and His work as the channel through which God pardons, justifies, sanctifies, glorifies, saves. A reasonable faith must rest on a reasonable basis before a reasonable service can be rendered.

1. The sufferings and death of Jesus Christ serve as the ground of pardon, because they have revealed the righteousness of God more fully than the punishment of the whole race of man would have done. Enough has been

[1] *Discourses and Dissertations on Atonement*, p. 13.

already advanced to prove that pardon could not have been wisely and lovingly granted to man, except there had been such a display of the righteousness of God as would answer all the ends of law and order which punishment would have wrought out. This was demanded, not because God desired personal vengeance, or had pleasure in the death, as such, of the wicked. Far from us be such unworthy thoughts of Him who is love and light, and in whom there is no darkness at all. The necessity for a manifestation of His righteousness arose out of His relation to a universe of moral creatures, and to the transgressor himself. This the agony and death of Christ supplied. Here we have the Ruler coming in the person of His beloved Son, obeying the precepts of the law, and experiencing, as far as a pure filial soul could, the penal results of the sin of the world. By His active and passive righteousness He displayed the desert of sin, the Divine thoughts concerning it, and its utter and eternal antagonism to the Divine will and heart. And by this means God was declared to be just, and at the same time the justifier, a God of truth and integrity, and one who would blot out sins like a thick cloud, and remember them no more for ever. The cross

of Christ removes the difficulty out of the way of mercy reaching the greatest sinner, and by its adaptation to accomplish this proves that it is the divinely adapted medium by means of which those who deserve death may come to be possessors of eternal life.

2. Pardon is only enjoyed by those who have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as set before them in the Gospel. It is provided for all, and, by the Atonement, is secured as a free gift for all; but it is not enjoyed by any except those who are united to the living Saviour by faith. A human ruler who had no respect for his character or his kingdom, might, in a fit of utter wantonness, go from prison to prison, and discharge all those who were suffering under the condemnation of the law; but a wise king would not act in this foolish and criminal way. Before any one could have his sentence remitted, there would require to be both an external condition on account of which mercy would be extended, and a subjective condition ensuring the future good behaviour of the person to be liberated. When President Lincoln, in virtue of the power invested in him as chief magistrate of the United States of America, and after his government had demonstrated in the field its determination

and power to uphold the constitution in its integrity, and put down all opposition, issued a proclamation to the rebels of the Southern States that he would grant them a day of respite and pardon, he added to this the provision that they must swear to the Constitution, and express their willingness to obey its requirements. If they refused they fell back under the common law which dealt with those who committed treason, but if they obeyed they were treated by the higher law of the lawgiver, and were, on submission, pardoned. As a wise governor he provided, in the method of manifesting his clemency, a condition which ensured the loyalty of those who would be freed from the condemnation which rested on them. In so acting he was only following at a distance the lead of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Our God will abundantly pardon. Forgiveness through the blood, even redemption from the curse of the law, is provided, and free to all, without money and without price. But its enjoyment is not unconditional on the part of the transgressor, but is suspended on faith in Christ. This faith has a unifying power, and makes its possessor one with Christ in His life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and glory. "What," asks M. Bessier, "will it avail

me that Christ shall have made reparation for all our rebellion, satisfied all the claims of Divine justice, atoned for all our transgressions, if I remain a stranger to Him? By faith I give in my adherence to the truth embodied in His life and death; by faith I join myself to the new Adam, the head of the new humanity; with Him I cancel the fault of our first father—obedience takes the place of rebellion, love of alienation; with Him and by Him I enter again into fellowship with God. Faith in Christ subdues the pride of my heart, the independent spirit, which kept me far from God. It places me towards Him in the attitude of the sinner awaiting all from His forgiving love."[1] This faith which works in the soul by love, and binds it to Christ, who made the atonement, being the condition of the enjoyment of pardon, points out its object as the fit and becoming ground on which sins could be remitted.

3. Faith in Christ as He who died for our sins being the condition of the enjoyment of pardon, also produces reconciliation with God. Dr. James Martineau says that Christ's "modern disciples," meaning by that phrase those who believe in the doctrine of a vicarious atonement,

[1] *Oneness of the Race*, p. 56.

"teach that there are *two separate salvations*, which must follow each other in a fixed order; first, redemption from the penalty, secondly, from the spirit of sin; pardon for the past before sanctification in the present; a removal of hindrance in God previous to annihilation in ourselves."[1] He would invert the process, and have alienation removed first, and then, when the heart was right in its feelings, pardon would be granted. This is a most fanciful reading of human experience, and is a most erroneous reading of the word of God. It is, moreover, a misrepresentation of the views of those whom Dr. Martineau opposes. We never heard of "*two separate salvations*" (and the italics are his own) advocated by even the most extreme legalist who ever wrote on the doctrine. Salvation is, and must be allowed to be, by all reasonable men, Dr. Martineau included, a complex blessing. It has to do with sins committed against law, and their penalty, and with sin as a power in the soul. The sinner is condemned, is selfish, wayward, and an alien from God and good works. If he is to be rescued from his low and undone condition, there must be various elements in his deliverance. Pardon must be there; a

[1] *The Scheme of Vicarious Redemption*, p. 40.

desire for holiness must be experienced; reconciliation must be realised. He must be justified and sanctified. This may be called a double or triple salvation, if it is thought advisable; but it cannot be called either two or three "*separate* salvations." The various elements are distinguishable, it is granted, but not separated, nor, in fact, separable. So that he who is pardoned is also justified, and he who is justified is also sanctified, and he who is sanctified will be also glorified. In the order of time pardon and reconciliation are contemporaneous; but in the order of nature pardon comes first, and prepares, as it might be said, the way for the re-establishment of communion, friendship, love.

This order, which is condemned by Dr. Martineau, is the one clearly recognised in the New Testament. Without taking isolated texts, let the structure of Paul's Epistle to the Romans be considered. How did this inspired penman set the blessings of salvation before his readers? Not as Dr. Martineau apparently would have done. In the first two chapters, and almost to the end of the third, the apostle treats of sin and its condemnation. In the latter part of the third, to the end of the fifth, he treats of pardon and justification;

and it is only when he has discussed these aspects of the complex blessing of salvation, he passes on to the experiences of peace, life, joy, love, sanctification, and complete redemption. This, too, is the order which obtains with regard to man and man, as well as God and man. The past must be obliterated before confidence can be restored and newness of life felt. The dead past must be buried for ever before the future can be adorned with new life. The starting point of a new departure is forgiveness. An apt illustration of this truth is found in the life of Mr. Moody, the American evangelist. After his father's death the widow had a hard struggle to bring up her children, and it was made harder by one of the elder sons suddenly disappearing from the home. Over him the widow mourned as only a mother and a widow could. Long years after, when the widow was growing old, and her soft dark hair was turning white, one summer afternoon a tall swarthy man, with heavy black beard, was seen coming in at the gate. The mother knew not who it was, and said to the stranger who stood at the door, "Will you come in?" But the stranger did not move or speak, he could only weep. By means of the tears the long lost son was

recognised and entreated to come into the old home. "No, no!" said he, "I cannot come in till my mother forgives me."[1] Forgiveness was granted, fellowship was restored, reconciliation was effected. This is an illustration of how the soul stands in regard to God. Its sins are seen when God is thought of as they were never seen before. Like Luther, it is led sometimes to cry, "O my sins! my sins! my sins! they are great and exceedingly sinful." They appear all the more so when the pure life of Christ is seen, and the agony is considered of which they were the procuring cause. They "come atween me and the skies," and hide the light of the face of my Father. When thus felt I can do nothing but smite my breast, look to the cross, and pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner." When that prayer of faith is answered, I have joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom I have the at-one-ment,—reconciliation.

4. Acceptance of Christ, and pardon for His sake, begets love, which is the fulfilling of the whole law. This feeling would not be awakened, if it were not for the righteous love which is seen in the gift and Cross of the Son of God. When this love is beheld resting on

[1] *D.L. Moody and his Work*, by Rev. W. H. Daniels, pp. 8,9.

man, and sacrificing itself through agony, tears, and blood to reach its object, and save him from deserved wrath, it has a spiritual power to break hard and stony hearts, and subdue stubborn wills of the most potent kind. It acts on the sinful soul who looks to Christ dying for sin and revealing the heart of God for the sinner, like the warmth of the sun on the earth in Spring, and awakens a new life, which develops itself in bud, blossom, and fruit. Otherwise, the thought of God would only crush and excite fear and anguish in the guilty mind. "Shame," it has been said, "is a moral suffering excited by the eye of man; remorse is a convulsion of the soul as it consciously stands under the eye of God."[1] When, therefore, the soul comes to know its sins in the presence of the Eternal, remorse must be the result, the beginning of the fires of Gehennah is felt. The more that the mind dwells on the purity, holiness, and awfulness of the Being whose eye searches it through and through, the more does its convulsions heave and cause unrest. God cannot but condemn sin, for our hearts condemn us, and God is greater than our hearts,

[1] *The Soul: its Sorrows and its Aspirations*, by F. W. Newman, 5th Ed., p. 47.

and knoweth all things. What is experienced of agony under the eye of the Holy One does not lead to goodness, to aspiration after a higher life, or love. Oh no. "Remorse," as the author quoted truly says, "is not a sanctifying principle; on the contrary, it is an exceedingly dangerous one; the soul may die of it as truly as the body of acute pain. It often drives men to despair, to frenzied iniquity."[1] It is then that the awakened soul cries,—

> "Ah, miserable, which way shall I fly?
> Infinite wrath and infinite despair,
> Which way I fly is Hell, myself am Hell;
> And in the lowest deep a lower depth,
> Still thirsting to devour me, opens wide,
> To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven."[2]

How, then, can the voice of remorse be silenced, the fires of retribution be put out, the storm of condemnation hushed to a calm, the dead heart awakened to life and love? By the Cross, we reply, as a revelation of the righteous love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The love therein displayed is not one which overlooks the rebellion of man, and treats it as a matter of no importance. It is not of a mere sentimental kind, which, with soft words and honeyed phrases of effeminacy, smooths over the weltering evils which have their abode in

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 47. [2] *Milton's Poetical Works*, pp. 88, 89.

the spirit of him who has departed from the fountain of living waters. God in the Cross deals with sins, and by its darkness, desertion, and death, expresses His estimate of their evil and desert. Through His Son and His sufferings, He speaks to the whole universe in righteousness and love, and appeals to the principle of justice which He has implanted in His moral creatures. He says, as it were, "Behold in this "offering, through the Eternal Spirit of my Son, "I make known the nature, the guilt, and desert "of the sin of the world which He bears, that "my love may flow out to you, O ye children of "men. Behold my severity and goodness, and "know that those who by faith accept of this "offering will be looked upon by me as if they "were Christ, members of His body, part of His "Sacred person." When man responds by faith to God as He speaks by the cross, he is brought nigh in thought, heart, and life. He sees in the Sacrifice of the Son the sacrifice of the Father, "who spared Him not," as was the case with Abraham when Isaac was offered as a burnt offering; and the love displayed constrains him to live, love, and adore. "So far as God the Father was concerned" asks Dr. J. Parker, "what did the cross signify? It signified all that can be comprehended under

the term *love*. So far as Jesus Christ was concerned, what did the cross signify? Its interpretation runs thus: I die that men may live; I encounter the storm of sin that men may live in the calm of holiness; I show how submission may be conquest; I show the utmost verge and boundary of *love*; I honour a broken law, and establish a basis of gracious communication between God and man. He makes all other uses light; men forget their miseries in the sob of His overwhelming sorrow. So far as man was concerned, what did the cross signify? It signified his guilt, his self-helplessness, his entire dependence upon God for pardon, purity, and all the blessings of salvation. It was the returning to God, too strait for selfishness, but wide enough for penitence and trust."[1] At this Cross the Offended and the offender, the Father and the prodigal, the King and the rebel, God and the sinner meet, and are reconciled, and made one in Him who has put His hand on both. The love of God begets love in man, and the sacrifice of the Son leads to the self-sacrifice of those who are united to Him by faith, and are constituted living branches of the living vine, whose—

[1] *Ecce Deus*, pp. 226, 227.

"Boughs
Innumerable stretch through all the earth,
Ever increasing, ever each entwined
With each, all living from the Central Heart;
And you and I, my brethren, live and grow
Branches of that immortal human stem."[1]

CHAPTER XV.

THE ATONEMENT AS A PRACTICAL POWER.

WHEN Jesus said, "if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God,"[2] He laid down a principle which is of universal application in things moral and religious. The way to find out whether bread nourishes the physical organism is not to analyse its parts, and then reason from the results to the conclusion, but to eat it, and to test it in this way by practical evidence. If strength and health are imparted, this will be of more service to the common mind than the scientific investigations of the wisest men. The same holds good regarding religious doc-

[1] *The Disciples*, by H. E. Hamilton King, p. 97.
[2] John vii. 17.

trine and systems. If the doctrine is reduced to practice, received and wrought out in life, and tends to the exaltation, purity, and ennobling of the soul, this will show that it is in harmony with the will of God, and was divinely adapted to that end. Especially is this the case if it has produced such results over a wide and diversified experience, and over a long period of time. If its doing has fitted into the wants, the common wants of men in all conditions of culture and civilisation, and made them consciously better, holier, and more determinedly progressive, it must be that the doctrine is of God, and the experience it produces is the evidence of its truth. In this way Christianity has verified itself to thousands, yea millions, for centuries, who never studied the Evidences. Once they were blind, poor, and cast down, and Christ came and touched their eyes, and the scales fell off,—granted to them wealth which would never leave them, and took them by the hand, and lifted them up, and they stood erect in God's presence. Having done all this for them, sceptics might doubt and others might deny, but they knew that their Redeemer was a living Redeemer, who came down from heaven to make them whole.

1. The fact and doctrine of the Atonement

have been verified during the circle of the years in this practical way. In every conceivable way it has been tested and looked at, but it has never failed. Like a ministering angel, it has come with its message of reconciliation in the darkest hours of life, when all the billows were rolling over the heart, and the conscience was troubled, and it has said "peace," and there was a great calm. Its appeal has not, in the first instance, been to the intellect; with that, in truth, it has very little to do. It appeals to the conscience "of every man in the sight of God," and seeks to do for it what the anodynes of life cannot accomplish. More particularly, when the crisis of life is reached, which is the turning point of so many,—when self-confidence has departed, self-righteousness is beheld as filthy rags which tended only to corruption,—when the ground on which the feet was previously thought secure gives way, and reveals a pit which is bottomless,—when the dark, dense clouds of past sins were between the soul and God, and the thought of retribution haunted the soul like a spectre of fearful form, at this time the death of Christ for sin—my sins—has come like water to the thirsty, bread to the hungry, and sleep to the weary. When God was seen in Christ recon-

ciling the world to Himself, not imputing trespasses unto them, all was changed, and heaven had begun on earth. No faith in morals, no matter how exalted; no maxim in philosophy, no matter how far-reaching and true; no song of poet, no matter how sweet and melodious,—could have ministered to the wounded spirit. The balm required was the blood shed for the remission of sins, and the bread was that which was supplied in the body broken on the tree. Christ came, showed His hands, His feet, and pointed to His wounded side, and the anxious one exclaimed—

> "Rock of ages, cleft for me,
> Let me hide myself in thee;
> Let the water and the blood,
> From thy riven side that poured,
> Be of sin the double cure,
> Cleansing from its guilt and power."

2. So felt one whom we knew, and who has now gone home. He had grown to manhood, and lived a quiet, honest, and useful life. The duties devolving upon him as son, husband, father, were discharged with fidelity and care, and the externals of religion were not neglected. For years, however, he felt that he was not right with the things of the soul, and in relation to the claims of God and His

Son. Prayer, reading the Bible, and attempts at doing good had been tried; but they did not meet the want which was so keenly felt, nor remove the burden which lay so heavily on the conscience. As Providence would have it, he was led to be interested in a course of lectures, a syllabus of which had been placed in his hand by a friend, and which was being delivered in a church not far off from where he resided. He repaired to the place of meeting one Sabbath, when the subject was being discussed—"The belief of the Gospel necessarily gives the sense of pardon"—and listened with attention and earnestness, which deepened as the discourse proceeded. As the preacher, with unction, was addressing the hearer in the words, "God infinitely desires YOUR reconciliation to Himself; that He has already made a complete satisfaction for your sins; and that by Jesus dying your death *eternal life* has been GIVEN to you," the truth entered his soul, and pardon and peace were enjoyed. The revolution wrought in this person's experience was the greatest possible to man. He was a new creature. All things round about him were changed. The heavens, so he said, were brighter, the earth grander, the mountains more sublime, and the landscape

more expressive of beauty. All things were to his open vision full of joy and love, because full of God in Christ. Tell that man that the doctrine of the Atonement, of a vicarious life and death, of pardon through the blood of Christ, was not true; he would have answered, "I know better. It is not a matter of speculation with me, but of experience; for that which could make me partaker of such a salvation could be no fiction, but a glorious Divine fact."

3. Another illustration of the power of the fact and doctrine of the vicarious Atonement of Christ, is found in the life of Martin Luther. Though it is well known, we venture to direct attention to it here, because it is so striking in itself, and has so many sides which can be viewed with advantage. His early career does not bear on our aim, so it must be left untold. It is the pivot of his spiritual history alone with which we have to do, for it is the germ out of which the whole Reformation sprung. When a monk, though, as he says himself, "holy and irreproachable," his conscience was nevertheless filled with trouble and despair. "I could not," he adds, "suffer this expression, 'the righteousness of God;' I did not love this just and holy God who punished sinners. I was affected against Him with secret

rage." This state continued for a season, and wore him down in body, and sorely lacerated him in heart. He had no peace with himself nor with God, and this made his existence like a troubled sea. Like Paul he cried, "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this death?" But, meanwhile, he did not know the answer the Apostle gave to his own question. At length the period of deliverance came, and he was emancipated. His deliverance happened thus: "As I meditated," he records, "day and night upon the words, 'For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith,' God at length took pity on me. I perceived that the righteousness of God is that by which the just man, through God's goodness, lives—that is to say, *faith;* and that the meaning of the passage is, the Gospel reveals the righteousness of God, a passive righteousness, through which the God of mercy justifies us by faith. On this I felt as if I were born again, and seemed to be entering through the opening portals of Paradise." This doctrine was verified in the deepest life of Luther, and became part of his very spiritual being. He may or he may not, we do not discuss the question here, have had full

logical or altogether correct conceptions of the *doctrine* of Christ's work as an Atonement, but of the *fact* he had a firm hold, and not the smallest doubt. When he was called upon on one occasion to confess the doctrine which he held vital to salvation, he declared,—"There is no other person who has died for our sins, unless it be Jesus Christ the Son of God. I repeat once more, that although all the world, and all the devils were to tear one another to pieces, and burst with fury, this article is not the less true. . . . We hold it in the name of God."[1] Brave words, and suggestive also. Out of this experience produced by the reception of the doctrine and fact of the Atonement, the future life of Luther sprang, with its heroisms, struggles, temptations, and victories. It was the reception of this by a faith as strong as death, that made the monk a reformer, and its strength-imparting power was proved through the chequered history, and was testified to at its end. When on his deathbed, Dr. Jonas said to the old warrior who had sheathed his sword, and was ready to depart, "Reverend father, do you die in constant reliance on the faith you have taught?" To which he replied

[1] *History of the Reformation*, by J. H. M. D'Aubigne. Glasgow Ed., pp. 126, 127.

with distinctness, "YES," and shortly afterwards expired. Following this man through his years and battles, and standing at his bedside as he closes his eyes, we have more evidence of the truthfulness of our doctrine than volumes of arguments could give.

4. Turning in another direction, the practical power of the doctrine of the Atonement is demonstrated. Its power in individuals is undoubted, and its power in communities, we mean churches, is also apparent. It is acknowledged that the true Christian doctrine is aggressive, and was intended to spread. Christ was not for one nation, but for all nations; not for one age, but for all ages. His kingdom was to stretch from shore to shore, till all the kingdoms of this world be merged into the glorious kingdom of God and His Christ. "There never was a system," says a Unitarian writer, "which was so general in its regards, which bore so invasive a character, as Christianity in its earliest days. . . . Every preacher was a missionary, going about doing good, sent, and glorying in his office, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. We are sure, therefore, that the spirit of missions is the Spirit of Christ and Christianity."[1] The testi-

[1] Quoted in *Logic in Theology*, &c., by Isaac Taylor, p. 115.

mony is true, and a standard by which doctrines and systems of Christianity can be fairly tested. The missionary form of doctrine must be the one nearest the original, especially when it is not closely allied with a politico-ecclesiastical system; and that form of doctrine which has not power to send its branches abroad is not the one which was to be carried to the ends of the earth. The men do not make the doctrine, but the doctrine the men. Their life and energy are derived from what they believe about Christ. If their faith dwells alone, it is what James calls "a dead faith;" but if it works, and works outward as well as inward and heavenward, it has the imprimatur of the Saviour, and is the Gospel which is designed for every creature.

Which of the churches possess the missionary spirit, do missionary work at home and abroad, and which are restless in their endeavours to make known the love wherewith the Father loved the world? Are they those who deny the divinity of the Lord, who oppose the doctrine of the Atonement, and do not like what they sometimes designate "a religion of blood?" Are they those who attend to culture, development, and education, more than conversion, sanctification, and confession of

sin? With all charity, and with all truth, we answer, No. Those churches which have held loosely, or denied the vicarious doctrine of the Atonement, have been utter failures so far as the missionary spirit or missionary work is concerned. They have aimed, it is granted, to minister to the refined, the polite, and those who admire art and literature. They have done a little to aid some of the educational and political movements of the times; but they have scarcely lifted their little finger in the cause of Christianising the heathen at home and abroad. This tells of the powerlessness of what they make known, and how far short they come of reaching the position occupied by Paul, when he declared the Gospel to be the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

Evangelical churches have been the mission churches of modern Europe and America. Those who have received the doctrines of the Divine Incarnation and Atonement as cardinal doctrines, have ever been foremost in the work of the evangelisation of the world. They have felt that necessity was laid upon them, and that a woe would be theirs if they did not preach the Gospel. At great expense of money and toil, preachers, fired with zeal, have

been sent to every place where man is found; and they labour with a self-devotion which nothing could inspire but the cross of Calvary. Williams, Carey, Judson, Moffat, and Livingstone, had their souls set aflame by the love of God as seen in the death of His Son. In the light of the Atonement they learned the value of man, the danger which threatened the human soul, and the desire of a Three-One God that all men should be saved. Forward they went in their mission, counting not their lives dear unto themselves, that they might make known the tidings that Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief. And the power they wielded, and the spirit they exhibited in their self-sacrificing labours, proclaim that what individuals, communities, nations, and the world require, is supplied in the doctrine of Christ and Him crucified.

5. The practical power of the Atonement will extend, and has extended, farther than this globe. What was done and endured on this earth is felt throughout the empire of Jehovah, and will be employed as an educational agency for the instruction of angels, great in might and perfect in character. He who sits on the universal throne is the same Christ who died on the Cross; and God, through Him, will, in

the ages to come, show the richness of His grace, and the beneficence of His nature, to all the spiritual host of the better world. These things we see through a glass darkly now; but what we do see opens up to the religious spirit a vista of glorious things, when—

"Every creature which is in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, shall be heard saying, 'Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.'"[1] Amen.

[1] Rev. v. 13.

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